

MINUTES
OF
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FORTY-THIRD
43rd
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
Presbyterian Church of Australia



HELD IN SYDNEY
SEPTEMBER 1997

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

Presbyterian Church of Australia

1997

OFFICERS

Right Reverend the Moderator:

REV. BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, M.E., B.D.
14 Ian Street, Rose Bay NSW 2029
(02) 9388 1203 (H) (03) 9388 1206 (O) (02) 9388 1006 (FAX)

Clerk of Assembly:

REV. PAUL G. LOGAN, B.A., D.Min., Dip.Ed.Stud., M.A.C.E.
GPO Box 100, Sydney NSW 2001
(02) 9955 1662 (H) (02) 9310 3724 (O) (02) 9310 2148 (FAX)

Deputy Clerk:

REV. BRUCE M. MELLER, B.D., Th.L.
43 Park Road, Hurstville NSW 2220
(02) 9580 1425 (H) (02) 9579 3091 (FAX)

Business Convener:

REV. PETER J. BARSON
6 Warilda Street, Camp Hill Qld. 4152
(07) 3398 3607 (H) (07) 3398 1693 (FAX)

Procurator:

MR. GARRY K. DOWNES, A.M., Q.C., B.A., LL.B.
180 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000 (02) 9232 1450

Law Agent:

MR. SIMON FRASER, B.A., LL.M.
Colin Biggers & Paisley, Shell House
11th Level, 140 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000 (02) 9221 2022

Assembly Officer

MR. PETER J. GRAHAM, OAM. Esq.,
GPO Box 100, Sydney NSW 2001

Trustees for The Presbyterian Church of Australia:

Persons who for the time being
hold office as the Trustees of
"The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust"
GPO Box 100, Sydney NSW 2001
Telegraphic Address: Presbyter, Sydney
Telephone: (02) 9310 1455 Fax: (02) 9310 2148

The Assembly will meet on Tuesday 24th July, 2001
at 7 p.m. in the Sydney Town Hall

MODERATORS
of the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA

Rev. John Meiklejohn..D.D	1901
Rev. Alexander Hay..D.D	1902
Rev. David Bruce..D.D	1903
Rev. P.J. Murdoch..M.A.	1905
Rev. T.E. Clouston..D.D	1906
Rev. Peter Robertson	1907
Rev. John Ferguson	1909
Rev. W.S. Rolland	1910
Rev. J. Laurence Rentould..M.A..D.D	1912
Rev. George Davidson..M.A..D.D	1914
Rev. Ronald G. Macintyre..C.M.G..C.B.E..M.A..D.D	1916
Rev. John Walker..D.D	1918
Rev. James Gibson..M.A	1920
Rev. John Mathew..M.A..D.D	1922
Rev. James Crookston	1924
Rev. R. Scott-West..D.D	1926
Rev. Alexander Crow	1928
Rev. Donald A. Cameron..M.A	1930
Rev. G.R.S. Reid..M.A..D.D	1933
Rev. John Mackenzie..M.A..D.D	1936
Rev. John Flynn..O.B.E..D.D	1939
Rev. R. Wilson Macaulay..B.A..D.D	1942
Rev. Alexander C. Grieve..B.A	1945
Rev. Julian R. Blanchard..C.B.E..B.A..D.D	1948
Rev. Richard Bardon..O.B.E..B.A	1951
Rev. Sir Francis W. Rolland..O.B.E..M.C..M.A	1954
Rev. David J. Flockhart..M.A	1957
Rev. Alan C. Watson..M.A..D.D	1959
Rev. Hector Harrison..O.B.E..M.A..B.D	1962
Rev. William Young..B.A	1964
Rev. Norman Faichney..B.A	1967
Rev. James Frederick McKay..C.M.G..O.B.E..M.A..B.D	1970
	1971
Rev. Gillam Albert McConnel Wood..O.B.E..A.M..B.A	1973
Rev. Neil MacLeod..A.M..M.A..D.D	1974
Rev. Kenneth Joseph Gardner..O.B.E..D.D	1977
Rev. James Mullan..B.A..Dip.R.E	1979
Rev. Norman Monsen	1982
Rev. Edward R. Pearsons	1985
Rev. Alan C. Stubs..B.A..B.D..M.Th..Dip.R.E	1988
Rev. Murray J.K. Ramage	1991
Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman..B.A..B.D..M.Litt..M.Th..Th.D	1994
Rev. Bruce H. Christian, M.E..B.D	1997

CLERKS
of the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA

Rev. James S. Laing..D.D.	1901-1906
Rev. George Tait..M.A.	1906-1933
Rev. R. Wilson Macaulay..B.A..B.D.	1933-1942
	1945-1951
Rev. W.D. Marshall..M.A.	1942-1945
	1951-1957
Rev. G. Ross Williams	1957-1970
Rev. L. Farquhar Gunn..M.B.E..E.D..M.A..B.D.	1970-1974
Very Rev. Edward R. Pearsons	1974-1985
Raymond P.W. Jell, Esq..L.Th..A.R.E.I..A.I.C.M. A.A.I.M..J.P.	1985-1988
Very Rev. Kenneth J. Gardner..O.B.E..D.D.	1988-1991
Rev. Paul G. Logan..B.A..D.Min..Dip.Ed.Stud..M.A.C.E.	1991-

DEPUTY
(OR JUNIOR)
CLERKS

Rev. George Tait..M.A.	1901-1906
Rev. E.E. Baldwin..M.A..Dip.Ed	1922-1939
Rev. W.D. Marshall..M.A.	1939-1942
	1945-1951
Rev. G.W. McAlpine	1942-1945
Rev. J.M. Stuckey..B.A.	1951-1962
Rev. C.M. Dyster..M.A..B.D..S.T.M.	1962-1964
Rev. L.F.F. Gunn..M.B.E..E.D..M.A..B.D.	1964-1970
Rev. A.M. McMaster..B.A..B.D.	1970-1974
Raymond P.W. Jell, Esq..L.Th..A.R.E.I..A.I.C.M. A.A.I.M..J.P.	1977-1985
Rev. J.J.T. Campbell..B.A.	1988-1991
Rev. B.M. Meller..B.D..Th.L	1991-

LAW AGENTS

Messrs. Davies and Campbell	1901-1930
Mr. Alexander Gerald Proudfoot	1930-1950
Mr. J.P. Adam..M.A..LL.B..Dip.Ed.	1950-1972
Mr. John G.R. McArthur..LL.B.	1972-1977
Mr. Lindsay J. Moore..LL.B.	1977-1991
Mr. Simon H. Fraser..B.A..LL.M.	1991-

PROCURATORS

Mr. John Garland..K.C..M.A..LL.B.	1901-1921
Mr. John A. Ferguson..B.A..LL.B.	1921-1936
Mr. Brian C. Fuller..Q.C..B.A..LL.B.	1936-1956
Mr. Douglas M. Little..Q.C.	1956-1959
Mr. F. Maxwell Bradshaw..M.A..LL.M.	1959-1992
Mr. Garry K. Downes..A.M..Q.C..B.A..LL.B.	1992-

AUTHORISATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commission of Assembly:

Appointment of new editor for Australian Presbyterian Life - Min. 39(8)(b).

Assemblies:

Organising of suitable events on a local or regional basis to celebrate the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia - Min. 21(4).
Establishment of a Centenary Fund - Min. 21(5).
Reimbursement of 1997 General Assembly of Australia Expenses - Min. 38(8).
Consideration of the establishment of a unified Long Service Leave scheme - Min. 38(10).
Recommend that the superannuation funds in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales provide for 100% portability - Min. 41(1).
Eldership as a matter of government - Min. 59.
Approve the continued use of Moore Theological College as a venue for satisfying part of the requirements for training for the ministry - Min. 70(1).
Authorise the use of the Perth Consortium for ministerial training with the approval of the Western Australian Assembly - Min. 70(4).
Approve the cooperating or consortium arrangements between the Queensland Theological Hall and other theological colleges of Reformed confession and Presbyterian conviction in Queensland subject to the agreement of the Queensland Assembly - Min. 70(5).
Courts of the Church invited to make submissions on matters of theological education to the College Committee - Min. 71(2).
Recommended to State assemblies that they endeavour to establish diaconal ministry in all congregations under their jurisdiction with regulations as nearly as possible the same in all States - Min. 91(2).
Reception of ministers who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia but not become ministers of another denomination - Min. 109
Assemblies requested to enact, where required, laws to regulate the reinstatement of people who have not entered the ministry of another denomination - Min. 109(2).
General Assembly of Tasmania encouraged to publicise nationally the need of \$35,000 per annum for the purpose of church planting in Burnie - Min. 113.

Presbyteries:

Organising of suitable events on a local or regional basis to celebrate the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia - Min. 21(4).
Commending Christian Education Committee publications - Min. 36(1).
Courts of the Church invited to make submissions on matters of theological education to the College Committee - Min. 71(2).
Reinstatement of ministers who have resigned from the ministry but not entered the ministry of another denomination a matter for presbyteries - Min. 109(1).

Ministers:

Encourage ministers to serve in the Defence force as chaplains - Min. 35(3).

Sessions:

Commending Christian Education Committee publications - Min. 36(1).
Courts of the Church invited to make submissions on matters of theological education to the College Committee - Min. 71(2).

Congregations:

Establishment of a Centenary Fund - Min. 21(5).

Commend greater support of Australian Presbyterian Life - Min. 39(4).

Assembly Committees:

Provision of \$10,000 for a history of the General Assembly of Australia - Min. 21(6).
Committee on Relations with Other Churches to enter into discussions with the Reformed Churches of Australia - Min. 34.

Reimbursement of travelling expenses to committee meetings - Min. 38(6).

Request Trustees to finance expenditure authorised by the Finance Committee pending reimbursement by State Finance or equivalent committees - Min. 38(9).

Authorise National Journal Committee to draw up terms and conditions for the appointment of a new editor for Australian Presbyterian Life - Min. 39(8).

Authorise the National Journal Committee to establish an internet (web) presence for the Presbyterian Church of Australia - Min. 39(11).

Encourage APWM to enter into formal discussions with the Presbyterian Church in America and the Westminster Presbyterian Church with a view to closer cooperation in cross-cultural ministry - Min. 45(6).

Urge APWM to publish the Missionary and Prayer Directory at least every two years - Min. 45(13).

Instruct the College Committee to report to the next Assembly on matters relating to theological education - Min. 71(1).

Committees of the Church invited to make submissions on matters of theological education to the College Committee - Min. 71(2).

Code Committee to prepare a booklet giving a summary of Presbyterian Church of Australia policy and procedures in simple English for non-English speaking congregations - Min. 72(1).

Church and Nation Committee requested to study the use and tolerance of blasphemous language - Min. 80(7).

APWM requested to establish a sub-committee concerned with responsibilities relating to ministry to Aborigines - Min. 99.

APWM requested to call a conference between APWM, PIM Home Mission and Evangelism committees in all States concerning cross-cultural and Aboriginal ministries within Australia - Min. 101(1).

Code Committee requested to consider matters raised in the Business Convener's report dealing with matters pertaining to women in the eldership - Min. 119 1967 GAA decision on women in the eldership not binding on the State churches - Min. 120.

Code committee to draw up sample regulations for the reinstatement of ministers who have resigned from the ministry but not entered another denomination - Min. 109.

Moderator-general:

Appointed as a delegate to the Reformed Ecumenical Council and fund his attendance at the REC Conference in Indonesia in 2000 A.D. - Min. 33(2).

Approval of Moderator-General's Expenses - Min. 38(4).

Requested to convey to the Prime Minister and the Federal Parliament the appreciation of the Church for the enactment of uniform gun controls - Min. 80(2).

Requested to communicate to the Prime Minister and the Federal Parliament to remove from legal distribution all materials of a violent and pornographic nature - Min. 80(9).

State Assemblies and Presbyteries under Barrier Act Procedures:

Enact new Articles of Agreement (Overture (vii) - Min. 24.

Whole Church:

Encourage the whole Church to take greater responsibility in the support of cross-cultural ministry to that existing missionaries will not have to be withdrawn - Min. 45(7).

Commend the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia - Min. 54.

Members of the Church invited to make submissions on matters of theological education to the College Committee - Min. 71(2).

Commend PIM Patrol Padres to the prayers of the whole Church - Min. 96(2).

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

New South Wales:

Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith
Rev. C.D. Balzer
Mr. P.J. Graham
Rev. J.F. Bartholomew
(4 additional members to be
nominated by State Assembly)

Victoria:

(To be nominated by
State Assembly)

Queensland:

Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner
Rev. P.J. Barson
(2 additional members to be
nominated by State Assembly)

Western Australia:

Mr. R. Kent
Rev. D.B. Fraser

Tasmania:

(To be nominated by
State Assembly)

South Australia:

(To be nominated by
State Assembly)

Appointed by the G.A.A.:

Rev. D.A. Burke, P.F. Cooper, B. Gorton, Dr. P.G. Logan, B.M. Meller, Dr. D.C. Mitchell, G. Kettmiss, Messrs. C. Langford, B. Hafner.

COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

New South Wales:

Rev. D.A. Burke
Rev. P.F. Cooper
Rev. B.M. Gorton
Dr. R.F. Burns
Mr. P.J. Graham
Mr. C.M. Langford

Victoria:

Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman
Rev. K.D. Allen
Rev. C.R. Thomas
Mr. B. Bayston
Mr. G. Bell
Mr. I. Downes

Queensland:

Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner
Rev. J.W. Langbridge
Mr. D.T. Gallagher
Mr. B. Layt

Western Australia:

(To be nominated by
State Assembly)

Tasmania:

Rev. D.N. Jones
Mr. A.L. Crawford

South Australia:

Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve
Mr. R.W. Arstall

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

Seven members elected by the General Assembly:

Rev. J.M. Elliott	Rev. C.J. Letcher
Miss M. Geddes	Rev. Dr. D.C. Mitchell
Mr. I. Campbell	Rev. L. Pearce
Rev. P. Nellies	

The Convener of each State Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee. An additional representative appointed by each of the APWM State Committees of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Dr. D. Pilgrim

Christian Education

New South Wales:	Mr. P. Bogs, Rev. D.A. Burke, Mr. D. Davies (2 vacancies).
and:	Rev. R.C. Clark, Mr. J. Mansfield
South Australia:	Rev. J.J.T. Campbell
Tasmania:	Rev. S. Nicholson
Victoria:	Rev. C.R. Thomas, A. Venn
Western Australia:	Rev. S.M. Bonnington
The convener of Christian Education (or a representative) from each State.	
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Rev. D.A. Burke

Church and Nation

The convener of each State church and Nation committee or equivalent or a member elected by the State General Assembly if there is no such State Committee or where the Convener of the State Committee is unable to fulfil the duties as a member of the Church and Nation Committee of the General Assembly of Australia.

Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Acting Convener:	Rev. P.C. Moore

Code

New South Wales:	Rev. S. Coulton, B.M. Gorton, P.W. Hastie
Queensland:	Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner, Rev. G.J. Nicholson, L. Hall.
South Australia:	Mr. R.W. Arstall
Tasmania:	Rev. Dr. D.C. Mitchell
Victoria:	Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, Rev. I.H. Touzel, J.P. Wilson
Western Australia:	Rev. J. Nocher
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	The Clerk of Assembly

College

The Conveners of the Theological Education Committee of the State Assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. The full-time professors and lecturers at the Theological Colleges or Halls approved by the Assembly.

Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Acting Convener: Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman

Defence Forces Chaplaincy

Rev. G.J. Abbas	Rev. K.R. Bell
Rev. P.A. Davidson	Rev. S.L. de Plater
Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman	Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith
Rev. A.D. Lang	Rev. J.A. Macintyre
Mr. J.C. Mackillop	Very Rev. A.C. Stubs
Rev. Dr. S.P. Swinn	
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	The Presbyterian Member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services.

Finance

New South Wales:	Mr. J. Mill, Rev. C.D. Balzer, J. Irvin, F. Avent
Queensland:	Messrs. R.W. Pilkington, D.L. McCullough
South Australia:	Mr. B. Redpath
Tasmania:	Mr. G.K. Roberts
Victoria:	Very Rev. E.R. Pearsons, Mr. F.B. Holder
Western Australia:	Rev. R.S. Duncanson
Four members elected by the General Assembly:	
Mr. P.A. Burke	Mr. K.P. Mar
Rev. P.F. Cooper	Mr. D.R. Brierley
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Mr. J. Mill

National Journal

Nine Members elected by the General Assembly:

Rev. R.P.F. Benn	Rev. S.M. Bonnington
Rev. P.W. Hastie	Rev. M. Wharton
Rev. S. Lindsay	Rev. Dr. A. Bird
Rev. G. Kettniss	Rev. J. Ellis
Mr. B. Redpath	
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Rev. R.P.F. Benn

Presbyterian Inland Mission

New South Wales: Rev. P.A. Beringer, Mr. P.A. Burke
Northern Territory: Dr. L.H. Greenwood
Queensland: Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner, Rev. R.C. Clark, A. MacNicol, Mrs. A. Petherick, Messrs R. Pilkington, G. Dunkley, R. Whiting, B.T. Scott.

(*Corresponding members from North Queensland Presbytery).

South Australia: Rev. R.M. Waterhouse
Tasmania: Mr. J.A.B. Finlay
Victoria: Rev. Dr. R. Mathews, M. de Pyle
Western Australia: Rev. S.M. Bonnington
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. J.J. Knapp

Public Worship and Aids to Devotion

New South Wales: Rev. S.A. Andrews, C.D. Balzer, P.F. Cooper, Prin. J.A. Davies, P.W. Hastie
Queensland: Rev. R. Van Delden
South Australia: Rev. J.J.T. Campbell
Tasmania: Rev. P.D. Mercer
Victoria: Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, Rev. R. Humphreys, M. Wharton
Western Australia: Rev. K.W. Morris
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. P.F. Cooper

Reception of Ministers

Five ministers and five elders elected by the General Assembly:

Rev. C.D. Balzer Mr. W. McLaren
Rev. D.J. Innes Mr. J. Searle
Rev. D.B. Fraser Mr. N. Taylor
Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve Mr. A.D. Turner
Rev. G.K. Kettmiss Dr. A.E. Vaughan

The Principal of each Theological Hall of the Church recognised by the General Assembly.
The Convener of the College Committee.

Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. C.D. Balzer

Relations with Other Churches

New South Wales: Rev. D.A. Burke, J.E. Webster
Queensland: Rev. Prof. I. McIver, R. van Delden
South Australia: Rev. J.J.T. Campbell, W. Zurrer
Tasmania: Rev. P.D. Mercer, Mr. A.D. Turner
Victoria: Mr. W. Lawrence, Rev. Prof. D.J. Milne
Western Australia: Rev. S.M. Bonnington, K.W. Morris
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman

**Ad Hoc Committee on the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia
(Min. 21(7))**

Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman
The Clerk of Assembly
Convener of the Finance Committee
Rev. S.M. Bonnington
Rt. Rev. S.J. Nicholson
Rev. D.A. Burke
The Secretary of the P.W.A.
Mr. S.H. Fraser
Mr. M. Murany
Convener:

The Moderator-General
The Deputy Clerk of Assembly
Rev. P.J. Barson
Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve
Rev. Dr. G.R. Fullerton
The President of the P.W.A.
Miss K. Astles
Mr. P.J. Graham

Very Rev. Prof A.M. Harman

Ad Hoc Committee on the Ministry of Women (Min. 57(1))

Rt. Rev. B.H. Christian
Mrs. N. Moore
Miss S. Maddrell
Rev. P.J. Barson
Rev. P.F. Cooper
Rev. J.F. Bartholomew
Convener:

Dr. J. Asher
Mrs. E. Mill
Dr. C. Gauld
Rev. D.A. Burke
Rev. M. Wharton

Rt. Rev. B.H. Christian

Ad Hoc committee on an Emblem/Logo for the Church (Min. 126)

Rev. R. van Delden
Rev. D.J. Thurston
The Assembly Officers
Convener:

Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman
Rev. P.M. Campbell

Rev. R. van Delden

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS

ELECTED TO THE 1997 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW SOUTH WALES

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Ministers

Rev. B.M. Meller
Rev. B.H. Christian
Rev. D.A. Burke
Rev. Dr. P.G. Logan
Rev. P.F. Cooper
Rev. D.J. Thurston
Rev. I.K. Smith
Rev. Dr. P.E. Barnes
Rev. C.D. Balzer
Rev. C. ten Broeke

Elders

Mr. J. Mill
Dr. P.E. Lush
Mr. S.H. Fraser
Mr. K.P. Mar
Mr. P.A. Burke
Dr. R.F. Burns
Mr. P.J. Graham
Mr. C.J. Llewellyn
Mr. M.J. Quirk
Mr. C.M. Langford

Presbytery of Bathurst

Rev. I.R. Schoonwater
Rev. W.A. Stewart

Dr. H. Clements
Mr. G.R. Brown

Presbytery of Canberra

Rev. P.A. Davidson
Rev. N.A.C. Ericksson

Miss K. McQuarrie
Mr. D. Ferguson

Presbytery of the Central Coast

Rev. N.S. Wilce

Mr. R.D. Menzies

Presbytery of Dubbo

Rev. R.D. Garland
Rev. D.R. Schwarz

Mr. J. Greig
Mr. A.M. Horsburgh

Presbytery of the Hastings

Rev. A.N. McDonald
Rev. T.J. Woodland

Mr. J. Roomans
Mr. L. Jackson

Presbytery of the Hawkesbury

Rev. W.G. Morrow
Rev. P.A. Beringer
Rev. S. Coulton
Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith

Mr. D. Napier
Mr. R. Brown
Mr. A. Byleveld
Mr. R. Green

Presbytery of the Hunter

Rev. D.M. Smith
Rev. J.E. Webster
Rev. J.E.D. Seaton

Mr. W.G. McLeod
Mr. F.I. Gray
Mrs. I.S. Mellon

Presbytery of Illawarra

Rev. D.K. Robson
Rev. P.J. Currie

Mrs. A. Worthington
Mr. R. Creighton

Presbytery of Moree

Rev. T. Cheetham

Mr. T. Davis

Presbytery of the Murrumbidgee

Rev. D.B. Stone

Mr. T. Binks

Presbytery of New England

Rev. S.A. Andrews

Mr. M. Sewell

Presbytery of the Northern Rivers

Rev. B.M. Gorton

Mr. D. Nicholds

Rev. P. Campbell

Mr. A. Bignill

Rev. L. Tattersall

Mr. R. Holvast

Presbytery of Sydney

Rev. J.D. Ting

Mr. M.C. Beveridge

Rev. K.D. Murray

Mr. W. McLaren

Rev. Prin. J. Davies

Mr. J.H. Watson

Rev. J.M. Elliott

Mr. P. Mitchell

Rev. Dr. J. Mock

Mr. D.R. Brierley

Presbytery of Sydney North

Rev. Dr. R.G. McKinnon

Mr. G.G. Drummond

Rev. Dr. L.M. Robins

Mr. J.C. Mackillop

Rev. A.B. Clark

Mr. J. Penman

Rev. A.D. Lang

Dr. C.H. Thorburn

Presbytery of Sydney South

Rev. R.P.F. Benn

Mr. D. Jamieson

Rev. S. Marquet

Mr. E.F. Duncan

Rev. Dr. E.F. Brown

Mr. J. McGregor

Presbytery of Wagga Wagga

Rev. A.C. Macmillan

Mrs. P. Downey

Rev. J.F. Bartholomew

Mrs. J. Duke

QUEENSLAND

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner

Mr. D.L. McCullough

Rev. G.A. Tosh

Mr. B. Layt

Rev. J. Langbridge

Mr. D.T. Gallagher

Rev. B.E. G. Napper

Mr. R.W. Pilkington

Presbytery of Brisbane

Rev. L. Hall

Mr. J. McClenahan

Rev. J.J. Knapp

Mr. S. Petherick

Rev. G. Kettmiss

Mr. N. Liddell

Presbytery of Darling Downs

Rev. Dr. D. Clarnette

Mr. R. Williams

Rev. D. Secombe

Mr. R. Apsey

Presbytery of Mowbray

Rev. P.J. Barson
Rev. G. Eastwell
Rev. S.G. Teale

Mr. J.E. Tucker
Mr. N.L.G. Taylor
Mr. K. Muller

Presbytery of North Brisbane

Rev. P.J. Bloomfield

Mr. D. Lewis

Presbytery of North Queensland

Rev. R. Van Delden
Rev. D.A. Broadwater

Mr. B. Hafner
Mr. G. McDonald

Presbytery of Rockhampton

Rev. J. Brown
Rev. H. Pennings

Mr. R.W. Farr
Mr. J. Baker

Presbytery of Wide Bay - Sunshine Coast

Rev. G.J. Abbas

Mr. D. Grace

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve

Mr. R.W. Arstall

Presbytery of Penola

Rev. A. Slater

Mr. D. Bradley

Presbytery of Torrens

Rev. J.J.T. Campbell

Mr. B. Redpath

TASMANIA

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. D.N. Jones

Mr. A.L. Crawford

Presbytery of Tasmania

Rev. S.J. Nicholson
Rev. P.D. Mercer

Mr. G.K. Roberts
Mr. A.D. Turner

VICTORIA

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rt. Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman
Rt. Rev. K.D. Allen
Rev. C.R. Thomas
Rev. I.H. Barker
Rev. Prof. D.J.W. Milne

Mr. B.D. Bayston
Mr. G. Bell
Mr. I. Downes
Mr. C. Morrow
Mr. J. Bennie

Presbytery of Ballarat

Rev. G. Fraser
Rev. J.H. Stasse

Mr. C. McCracken
Mr. F. Newall

Presbytery of Benalla

Rev. J.B. Baker
Rev. R.D. Taylor

Mrs. M. Bristow
Mr. P. Betts

Presbytery of Bendigo

Rev. M. de Pyle

Mr. D. Chandler

Presbytery of Flinders

Rev. J. Ellis
Rev. K.T. Martin
Rev. I.H. Touzel

Mr. D. Gillies
Mr. D. Cutler
Mr. J. Little

Presbytery of Geelong

Rev. J.B. Stewart
Rev. A.D. Lendon

Mr. D. Wishart
Mr. C.E. Baker

Presbytery of Gippsland

Rev. P.E. Swinn

Mr. W. Conrow

Presbytery of Kilnoorat

Rev. C. Siriweera
Rev. A. Every

Mr. S. Owen
Mr. S. Ferguson

Presbytery of Maroondah

Rev. M. Tonkin
Rev. D. Brown

Mr. W. Vandenberg
Mr. W. Lawrence

Presbytery of Melbourne East

Rev. R.A. Humphreys
Rev. M.A. Wharton
Rev. J.S. Woodward

Mr. K. Johnston
Mr. D. Renshaw
Mr. J.B. Dimelow

Presbytery of Melbourne North

Rev. J.S. Lindsay
Rev. D.W. Elliott

Mr. F. Goodson
Mr. W. Roodenburg

Presbytery of Melbourne West

Rev. P.A. Owen
Rev. P.W. Phillips

Mr. B.C. Evans

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. S.M. Bonnington

Mr. S. Tomlinson

Presbytery of Western Australia

Rev. K.W. Morris
Rev. R.S. Duncanson

Rev. A. Perrie
Capt. A.S. Small

SPEECH GIVEN BY MR S H FRASER, LAW AGENT, WHEN MOVING AMENDMENT TO MOTION OF REV K T MARTIN THAT THE ASSEMBLY DECLARE THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE ELDERSHIP TO BE A QUESTION OF DOCTRINE AND GOVERNMENT (MIN 59)

Moderator,

The issue of the ordination of women to the eldership is obviously a very significant issue in the life of the Church. But even more significant is the constitutional issue which this issue raises and which this Assembly now squarely faces with the proposed resolution of Mr Martin, namely that the Assembly declares that the ordination of women to the eldership is a question of doctrine and government. I refer to those sponsoring this motion as the Overturists, as this is their first step in supporting the Overture from the Victorian Assembly on this issue, being Overture (i).

The starting point should be to have a correct understanding of the constitution of the Federal Church. I emphasise the word Federal because it needs to be understood that what we have in Australia is unusual in terms of Presbyterian polity. As you are aware prior to the creation of the Federal Church there were six autonomous and independent State churches each governed by a General Assembly. That Assembly had supreme powers within the State.

The creation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia did not merely extend the pyramidal form of each State church to make one all-embracing whole: instead the nature of the added federal structure was such that it did not turn the State churches into provinces of the new whole, but left them intact except insofar as what was done led to interference with them. Hence the State churches continue as entities within the total constitution and their General Assemblies remain as supreme governing bodies in the respective States.

The constitution of the Federal Church is the Scheme of Union of 1901 which is divided into two parts. The Basis of Union deals with the doctrinal standards of the Church. The Articles of Agreement deal with the system of government of the Church. It is in the Articles of Agreement that one finds the establishment of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and its constitution and powers. Article IV needs to be referred to in full. It provides as follows:

"The General Assembly shall have functions legislative, administrative and judicial; supreme with respect to the doctrine, worship and discipline of the Church, the mission as to heathen, the training of students, the admission of candidates to the ministry, the reception of ministers from other churches, Christian education, and home missions, and the publication of the National Church Journal in so far as hereinafter provided."

It is only in these specific areas where the powers of the General Assembly are supreme (I note in passing not exclusive) that the General Assembly may direct the State churches.

Whilst the proposed motion of the Overturists does not specifically say so, the assumption must be that if the General Assembly declares the subject matter of the Overture as one of "doctrine" then the subject matter of the Overture falls within the supreme powers of the General Assembly in Article IV. It is interesting that the Overturists do not invite the Assembly to declare that the issue is solely one of doctrine. Rather they invite the Assembly to declare that the issue is one of doctrine and government. Now the term government does not appear anywhere in the Articles of Agreement. However it does appear in the Preamble to the Scheme of Union where it is stated that the various State churches:

".....holding the same doctrine, government, discipline, and form of worship.... agree to unite on the following basis....."

When in Article IV we find that the supreme powers of the General Assembly include doctrine, worship and discipline of the Church, the omission of government is deliberate.

This is consistent with the long held view, and certainly one that was vigorously argued by the late Maxwell Bradshaw as Procurator, that the General Assembly does not have supreme power in the area of government. Whether this situation is logical or ideal I need not consider now - this is the situation which we have.

The Overturists are seeking to establish a novel proposition, which is that an issue may be at the same time both one of doctrine and one of government. Presumably they do so because they accept the view which has always previously prevailed that matters of government are not within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of Australia. The Overturists do not seek to get around that principle by arguing that the admission of elders is not a matter of government, which it clearly is. Rather they seek to get around it by the novel concept that an issue can be both government and doctrine at the same time.

I have an initial logical objection to the suggestion that an issue can be both doctrine and government. Simply as a matter of construction I suggest that Article IV of the Articles of Agreement is not intended to be read in that way and that the list of functions of the General Assembly of Australia is intended to list various items each of which are different from the other. After all, who would argue that there is no element of doctrine involved in, say, worship, or admission of candidates for the Ministry, or any of the other specific heads of power?

But more importantly if an issue of government can also be an issue of doctrine because there is a doctrinal element then would not the same apply to every issue which arises in the Church? A Church by its nature deals with the things of God. Sometimes these issues might be quite spiritual, other times they might be quite practical. But there is always doctrine involved. The operations of a State social service committee might be dealing with practical help for the needy, but there is an element of doctrine involved. If the proposition is accepted that wherever there is an element of doctrine then the power of the General Assembly to be supreme in doctrine immediately applies, then we have transferred to the General Assembly of Australia supreme powers in the total life of the Church. This is a revolutionary concept and one which would effectively rewrite the Federal Constitution of the Church.

By way of example, there is a similarity with which, in our Australian constitution, the Federal Government has been able in recent years to exploit its external affairs power to become involved in State matters. It has done this because of the availability of United Nations treaties which deal with subject matter which under our Australian constitution belongs to the States, such as criminal law. The Overturists would see a similar expansion of the powers of the General Assembly by arguing that all matters arising under Scripture constitute the doctrine of the Church through Clause 1 of the Basis of Union and not just its confessional statement in Clause 2.

If the Assembly agrees as it should that it is not open to it to take such a revolutionary interpretation of its own powers then that naturally raises the question as to what limit there is on the power with respect to doctrine. I think we should start by going back to those words in the Preamble to the Scheme of Union which refer to the State churches holding the same doctrine, government, discipline and form of worship. So far as I can tell the State churches all had as their constitutional documents the various documents of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The key documents are those which I have listed in my amendment to the notice of motion namely the Confession of Faith, the Directory for Public Worship, and the Form of Presbyterian Church Government and the Ordination of Ministers.

I see the same concepts in the first book summarising the constitution of laws in the Church of Scotland being the Collections Concerning the Government of the Church of Scotland by William Stuart of Perdivan written in 1708 to 1711. In his preface he states as follows:

"I have divided these collections into four books. The first treats of Church Government, which principally concerns Her Office-bearers and Judicatories. The second is concerning the Worship of God and Sacred Things with what relates to the maintenance thereof. The third and fourth books treat of Church Discipline."

The second edition of Mair's Digest of Church Laws was printed in 1895. It was no doubt the main reference work used by the framers of our Federal Scheme of Union. The opening sentence of that book is as follows:

"The Constitution of the Church of Scotland might be said to consist of those principles or laws which may not be departed from in its doctrine, government, discipline or worship."

This same distinction has continued as the foundational basis for Presbyterian Churches. If you look at the introduction to the current edition of Cox's Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland you find that after a brief historical summary the author refers to the "main principles of the constitution" under the headings of doctrine, government, worship and discipline.

The doctrine of the Church is found in the Confession of Faith as referred to in Clause 2 of the Basis of Union which includes also the declaratory statement which makes reference to a number of doctrinal matters. The Confession of Faith deals with general Christian doctrine. It is on the basis of the Confession of Faith read in the light of the declaratory statement that we, as ministers and elders, subscribe to the doctrine of the Church. This is the doctrine which we are required to accept under the formula as provided for in Clause 6 of the Basis of Union. You should note that Clause 6 of the Basis of Union, after requiring acceptance of the subordinate standard with the explanations given in the declaratory statement as a confession of faith, further requires the subscriber to accept:

- a. the purity of worship practiced in the Church, and
- b. the Presbyterian government thereof.

Accordingly the clear distinction between doctrine, worship and government is maintained in Clause 6. The subscriber is finally required in Clause 6 to "assert, maintain and defend the doctrine, worship and government of this Church". The doctrine of the Church must be a known entity. If this General Assembly has the power to declare anything that it likes to be doctrine on the basis of the supreme standard then the certainty of knowing what constitutes the doctrine of the Church is abandoned. The doctrine must, consistently with the Basis of Union, relate to the doctrine as found in the subordinate standard. An office bearer can be charged with heresy for not accepting this doctrine. But I have difficulty seeing how a charge for heresy could be made out against anyone who can sign the formula yet does not accept some issue outside the confessional standard which is declared by the General Assembly to be doctrine, yet heresy in the nature of it is rejection of accepted doctrine.

If support is needed for this reasoning I refer to a major enactment by the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1851. After the Disruption of 1843 that Church prepared a statement of position which was adopted in full by the Assembly. Its first sentence is as follows:

"When it pleased Almighty God, in His great and undeserved mercy, to reform this Church from Popery by presbyters, it was given to the Reformers, amid many troubles, to construct and model the constitution of the Church, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and not accordingly to the will of earthly rulers".

After a long historical narrative, the enactment reaches the Westminster documents and states:

"These several formularies, as ratified, with certain explanations, by Acts of Assembly in 1645, 1646 and in particular 1647, this Church continues till this day to acknowledge as her subordinate standards of doctrine, worship and government:- with this difference, however, as regards the authority described to them, that while the Confession of Faith contains the creed to which, as to a confession of his own faith, every office-bearer in the Church must testify in solemn form his personal adherence; the Directory for Public Worship, the Form of Church Government, and the Directory for Family Worship, are in the nature of regulations, rather than of tests - to be enforced by the Church like her other laws, but not to be imposed by subscription upon her ministers and elders."

Not only does this illustrate the clear distinction between doctrine and government, but also the dangers which can arise from blurring this distinction. Is there a risk that, in the future, ordination vows will be treated as extending to government rather than doctrine? Could it in the future be heretical to be of the opinion, for example, that women should be eligible to be elders?

The matter can be tested in another way. Clause 3 of the Basis of Union provides that:

"Any proposed revision or abridgment of the subordinate standard of the Church, or restatement of its doctrine....." shall first be subject to a barrier act procedure.

The Overturists are not seeking to apply any Barrier Act procedure. They seek this Assembly to make a decision here and now that women are excluded from the eldership on grounds of doctrine. They therefore must argue that the proposed Overture is not seeking a restatement of the doctrine of the Church. Yet the resolution before us is that the matter be declared to be one of doctrine. They would need to argue that doctrine in the Articles of Agreement means something different from "doctrine" in the Basis of Union. Frankly I think this would be untenable.

Consider the Barrier Act point a little further. It has become fundamental to Presbyterian practice that Barrier Act procedure apply to major changes in the life of the Church. I extract the following words from the actual Barrier Act of the Church of Scotland of 1697:

"Considering the frequent practice of former Assemblies of this Church, and that it will mightily conduce to the exact obedience to the Acts of Assemblies, that General Assemblies be very deliberate in making of the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine or worship, or discipline, or government thereof, now happily established: do, therefore, appoint, enact and declare, that before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any Acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church, the same Acts be first proposed as Overtures to the Assembly, and, being by then passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and consent reported by their Commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who they may then pass the same into Acts, if the more general opinion of the Church, thus had, agree thereto."

What is proposed by the Overture could well be described as a "sudden alteration or innovation..... in either doctrine or worship or discipline or government" of the Church. Now the fathers of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Australia did not provide a Barrier Act procedure for the exercise of powers under Article IV but they did provide a Barrier Act procedure for a restatement of the doctrine of the Church in the Basis of Union. Surely it must have been everyone's intention that a major change of doctrine should be subject to Barrier Act procedure. Now that leaves the Overturists in a difficult position. Either they have to argue that the issue, being one of doctrine, has to be remitted under the barrier act procedure of Clause 3 of the Basis of Union, which could invoke Clause 4 which gives rights for dissenting congregations. Alternatively the Overturists have to argue that the General Assembly can make a major change in an area of doctrine which does not require any Barrier Act procedure at all and which is clearly contrary to the intent of the Barrier Act.

It may well be timely for the Church to consider just what meaning is to be given to the word "doctrine" in Article IV. But in my view it would be both wrong and reckless to adopt the Overturists' view of doctrine simply to achieve an ulterior motive, namely to prevent the entry of women to the eldership. Where one draws the line on the meaning of doctrine could be difficult. My amendment refers to the Westminster documents and the historic understanding the Church in this issue. The issue is one which was briefly considered by the Code Committee over the last few years as we were reworking new

Articles of Agreement for submission to this Assembly. My preference would have been to have "doctrine" in Article IV qualified to refer to the express doctrine of the Church and linked to the subordinate standard in the Basis of Union. However difficulties of defining this and reaching agreement meant that the Code Committee decided to leave the issue for the wisdom of General Assemblies in the future. I hope that this confidence in the wisdom of the General Assembly is not misplaced.

The procedures adapted by the Overturists suggest that they are approaching the issue of women in the eldership in the same manner as the issue of women in the ministry. But there are two critical distinctions. I should point these out because you may well be wondering where, if you rely to my comments, the position is left with the existing barrier to women in the Ministry.

It is true that in 1991 (Min 66) the General Assembly of Australia declared the issue of women in the Ministry to be a matter of doctrine, although there was no such resolution when the applicable Barrier Act procedure was commenced by the 1988 Assembly. What did the General Assembly mean by that statement? Did it mean that it was a matter of doctrine within Article IV? It did not say so but even if it did it doesn't matter. That decision of the General Assembly is what lawyers call obiter dicta. It is a decision which is not necessary for the subsequent exercise by the General Assembly of its powers. The founding fathers of the Constitution clearly intended that training for the ministry would operate on a national basis with a uniform standard of entry and training. Article IV specifically says that the General Assembly has supreme functions with respect to "the admission of candidates to the Ministry". The General Assembly therefore has an explicit and clear power in Article IV which confers upon the General Assembly authority to make decisions regarding the admission of candidates to the ministry. It was not either necessary or desirable for the General Assembly to have resolved that the matter was one of doctrine. In any event the General Assembly did not even rely on Article IV. You have to go back to what occurred in 1974. When the General Assembly agreed to admit women to the ministry it did so by placing a new Article in the Articles of Agreement which had this effect. A matter of this kind, in the Articles of Agreement, is a matter of government. Certainly in the Westminster documents the ordination of ministers is part of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government. But I think the persons responsible for suggesting the new Article did so for another reason, which was that they came up against the Barrier Act problem which I have referred to above. The proposed change was a very important change and one which clearly should go down under a Barrier Act procedure. But where was the procedure? It wasn't a change in the doctrine of the Church for the purposes of Clause 3 of the Basis of Union because nowhere in the subordinate standard is the issue referred to, it being a matter of government. Furthermore Article IV does not have a Barrier Act procedure. The only Barrier Act procedure which could have been used was under Article XIII to vary the Articles of Agreement. I suggest that those responsible proposed that the issue of women in the ministry be dealt with by a separate Article in order to use the Barrier Act provision dealing with amendments to the Articles. So when the General Assembly decided to reconsider this issue in 1988 by proposing to delete the words in Article VIII what had authorised women in the ministry and replace them with a new Article, either approving or disapproving women in the ministry, it was not relying upon powers under Article IV. Article IV does not control what can be placed elsewhere within the Articles and an Article on any subject matter can be included provided that it complies with the Article XIII Barrier Act procedure and does not constitute a revision of the standards of the Church or doctrine as referred to in Clause 3 of the Basis of Union.

Let me say in passing that the unnecessary declaration by the General Assembly in 1991 that the issue of women in the ministry was a matter of doctrine was the main problem we faced in the legal proceedings after the decisions which challenged the legal validity of the new Article. The challenge was that as the issue was doctrine it should have been remitted under Clause 3 of the Basis of Union which it was not. If the declaration had not been made it would have been a much harder argument to sustain. Fortunately, we never got that far in the proceedings, because the Court upheld our submission that the plaintiffs lacked legal standing to bring the action because their proprietary interests were

not at risk, as the Assembly had specifically protected the rights of existing female ministers and candidates. But do not assume that we would have won on the main issue if the judgement of the Supreme Court had reached that point.

But with the issue of women in the eldership there is no equivalent situation. There is no general power in Article IV dealing with eldership as there is for the admission of candidates to the ministry. What the Overturists should be doing, to give effect to their intentions, is seeking to have Article IV amended by the addition of a new power such as:

"the admission of persons to the eldership of the Church"

If such a power were to be added by way of amendment to the Articles then the General Assembly could at that time make a determination on this issue. Alternatively the Overturists could follow more closely what was done with the issue of women in the ministry and propose a special Article, although in my view this is undesirable and should not have occurred with the women in the ministry issue. The Articles should provide the framework within which decisions and policies are determined and should not comprise actual policy decisions.

In summary there are ways within the constitution of the Church that the Overturists could pursue their objectives. But the way which has been proposed, namely to seek to have the issue declared to be one of doctrine, is unsound and if accepted would constitute a fundamental change to our constitutional position.

Moderator, I could have sought simply to challenge the competency of the motion but I have proposed an amendment as I felt it was better to make a positive statement to more adequately express what I hope is the mind of the Assembly on this matter for the guidance of the Church in the future. I urge commissioners to support this amendment.

APPEAL

(i) From the Rev. G.N. Guy against a decision of the N.S.W. General Assembly.

I, Reverend Graham Noel Guy appeal to the Reverend the General Assembly of Australia against the decision made by the State Assembly of New South Wales third day of July 1997 at Croydon and within the Thompson Hall of the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney whereby the Assembly did:

Affirm the decision of the Pastoral Relations Commission to dissolve the pastoral tie between the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe and the Rev. G.N. Guy as from the rising of the Assembly. (N.S.W. B.B. 1997 Minute 130(1))

The reasons for this appeal are as follows:

There was a refusal to receive relevant evidence in that:

- (1) the Court refused to accept letters in support of the appellant namely:
 - i) Letter from K.K. Martin
 - ii) Letter from Auburn Ministers Fraternal
 - iii) Letter from Mrs. Joan McDonell
 - iv) Letter of support from Wendy and Steve Berlecky
 - v) Letter from Mrs. V. Hope
 - vi) Letter from Mr. L. Hope
 - vii) Letter from Mrs. Donna Wooley
 - viii) Letter from Mr. T. Soatini
 - ix) Letter from Mrs. Shirley Brabham
 - x) Letter from the Liberty Plains Chamber of Commerce
 - xi) Letter from the Principal, Auburn Public School
 - xii) Letter from C. Reeves, Town Planner, Auburn Council
- (2) the extract of the child's Police Statement, with names removed, was not made available and this Police Statement demonstrated that there existed sufficient cause for concern as to oblige the Minister and Session to exercise a duty of care as outlined in "Breaking the Silence" policy document.

Denial of natural justice in that:

- (1) the Petitioner was not granted an adjournment to prepare his case without the presentation of the documents as per minute 128.
- (2) the Pastoral Relations Commission denied the Petitioner the right of reply to the Pastoral Relations Commission Report claiming it to be a final determination from which non-acquiescence could only be by form of Petition.

Irregularity in the proceedings of the court in that the refusal to grant the Petitioner an adjournment did cause a breach of privilege in terms of Standing Order 55 for which the State Moderator did apologise to the Assembly and to the Petitioner without rectifying the breach.

Mistake in Judgement in that the General Assembly in N.S.W.:

- (1) did not take into consideration that under the ministry of the Petitioner the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe had:
 - * commenced ministry at Homebush Bay
 - * developed a multi-cultural congregation at Auburn
 - * turned an aging congregation into a congregation of whom a majority were families in the 30-45 age group with an average attendance of 34 at Sunday worship.
 - * was planning the annual Kid's Club
 - * a Businessman's Lunch
 - * the fifth Carol Service at Homebush Bay.
- (2) did fail to explore the effect of allegations of child sexual abuse between the friends and relatives of the deceased alleged offender and the Minister who had a duty of care to take protective measures for the safety of children.
- (3) did not note the influence and witness of the minister in the Community which enhanced the good name of the Church thereby creating the potential for church

growth.

Date: 13th July, 1997
(Rev) G.N. Guy
Signature of Appellant.

Presbyterian Church of Australia
in the State of New South Wales

EXTRACT MINUTE

At Croydon and within the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney on Friday the 4th day of July, 1997 at 2 p.m., the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W. met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with prayer.

Among other things:

107. Conciliation Committee: The report of the Conciliation Committee and an addendum to the report was laid on the table and received.

108. Dissents and Complaints (i) to (viii): Dissents and Complaints (i) to (viii) against decisions of the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury, together with extract minutes from the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury were received from the Rev. G.N. Guy.

109. Dissent and Complaint (ix): A dissent and complaint against a decision of the Presbytery of Sydney, together with extract minutes from the Presbytery of the Sydney was received from the Rev. I.F. Ransom.

110. Dissent and Complaint (x): A dissent and complaint against a decision of the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury, together with extract minutes from the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury was received from the Rev. G.N. Guy.

111. Communication (iv): A communication was received from the Rev. G.N. Guy stating that where a motion is rescinded there exists nothing to appeal against as the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury had rescinded Minutes 9611.52 to 9611.95, and falling from Dissent and Complaints (ii) to (vii).

112. Protestation: Mr. M.J. Quirk took protestation that Dissents and Complaints (ii) to (vii) had been fallen from and that the decision of the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury in each case was final.
The Assembly instructed the Clerk to forward an extract minute of this decision to the Presbytery.

113. Communication (viii): A communication was received from the Rev. I.F. Ransom withdrawing his dissent and complaint against a decision of the Presbytery of Sydney.

114. Protestation: The Rev. K.D. Murray took protestation that Dissent and Complaint (ix) had been fallen from and that the decision of the Presbytery of Sydney in the case was final. The Assembly instructed the Clerk to forward an extract minute of this decision to the Presbytery.

115. Notice of Motion: The Moderator ruled that the notice of motion by the Rev. P.E. Boase concerning the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury and the Pastoral Relations Commission be taken following the reception of the report of the Pastoral Relations

Commission.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

116. Pastoral Relations Commission: The report of the Pastoral Relations Commission and an addendum to the report was laid on the table.

The Rev. P.E. Boase requested the Moderator to rule on the competency of the motion to receive the Pastoral Relations Commission report in regard to the Code 3.50.

The Moderator ruled that the motion to receive the report of the Pastoral Relations Commission was competent.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

The motion to receive the report of the Pastoral Relations Commission was approved.

The Rev. I.F. Ransom and G.N. Guy recorded their dissent.

124. Presbytery of the Hawkesbury: Pursuant to notice the Rev. P.R. Dunstan moved:

That the Assembly:

Declare that the members of the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury are excluded from participating in the deliberations or debate on petition (v) and any consequent motions on the grounds of conflict of interest.

The competence of the motion was challenged.

The Moderator ruled the motion incompetent.

125. Petition (v): A petition was received from the Rev. G.N. Guy to overturn the decision of the Pastoral Relations Commission to dissolve the Pastoral Tie with the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe.

126. Papers for Petition (v): Pursuant to notice the Rev. I.F. Ransom moved:
That the Assembly:

Approve the circulation of the following documents in connection with Petition (v) in the name of the Rev. G. Guy.

- (1) Letter from Mr. K.K. Martin
- (2) Letter from Auburn Ministers' Fraternal
- (3) Letter from Mrs. Joan McDonell
- (4) Letter of support from Wendy and Steve Belecky (2 pages)
- (5) Letter from Mrs. V. Hope (2 pages)
- (6) Letter from Mr. L. Hope (2 pages)
- (7) Letter from Mrs. Donna Woolley (2 pages)
- (8) Letter from Mr. T. Soatini
- (9) Letter from Mrs. Shirley Brabham
- (10) Letter from Liberty Plains Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- (11) Letter from the Principal, Auburn Public School
- (12) Letter from C. Reeves, Town Planner, Auburn Council
- (13) Transcript of Interview with alleged victim (NSW Police Service) (2 pages) with statutory declaration as to authenticity.

The motion was seconded.

127. Privilege: The Rev. P.W. Hastie raised a Question of Privilege - "Is the Assembly entitled to qualified privilege under the laws of defamation if it makes available the transcript of interview with alleged victim (NSW Police Service) with statutory declaration as to authority?"

The Procurator gave advice on the Question of Privilege.

The Moderator ruled that the documents proposed to be circulated be not circulated to the Assembly as they had not been before the court of first instance.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

128. Petition (v): The petitioner was called to the bar:
It was moved and seconded that the Assembly adjourn the debate.
The motion was disapproved.
There appeared for the petitioner the Rev. G.N. Guy.
It was moved and seconded that the Assembly sit in private.
The motion was disapproved.
The Rev. K.W. King moved as a motion of procedure that the document entitled "Determinations of the Pastoral Relations Commission as they relate to the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe", be read to the Assembly.
The motion was seconded and approved.
It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Assembly continue to sit in open court.
The document was read to the Assembly.
Questions were called for.

129. Privilege: Mr. D.R. Brierley raised a Question of Privilege in terms of Standing Order 55.
The Moderator ruled there had been a breach of privilege and apologised to the Assembly and the Rev. G.N. Guy.

130. Petition (v): It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Assembly grant the prayer of the petition.

Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(1) Affirm the decision of the Pastoral Relations Commission to dissolve the pastoral tie between the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe and the Rev. G.N. Guy as from the rising of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. I.F. Ransom recorded his dissent.

The Rev. G.N. Guy craved leave to appeal to the General Assembly of Australia.

Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(2) Notwithstanding the appeal of the Rev. G.N. Guy to the General Assembly of Australia, proceed to affirm the decision of the Pastoral Relations Commission to dissolve the pastoral tie between the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe and the Rev. G.N. Guy as from the rising of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(3) Request the Ministry and Mission Committee to consider providing sufficient funds to maintain Mr. Guy and his family for two months following the dissolution of the pastoral tie, on the understanding that such funds will be a charge against the congregation of Auburn-North Lidcombe to be repaid before Terms of Call to another minister will be approved.

The motion was seconded.

The Rev. R.J. McCracken moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete all words after "pastoral tie".

The amendment was seconded and disapproved.

The motion was approved.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(4) Request the Committee of Management of Auburn-North Lidcombe to allow Mr. Guy and his family two months free occupancy of the manse following the dissolution of the pastoral tie.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

- (5) Advise the Rev. Graham Guy, the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury, the session at Auburn-North Lidcombe, the Pastoral Relations Commission and the Ministry and Mission Committee of the decisions of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. T.E. Hobbs moved:

That the Assembly:

- (6) Express its pastoral concern for the Rev. G.N. Guy and his family and appoint a committee of three persons consisting of the Moderator, the Rev. T.E. Hobbs and Mr. J.C. Mackillop to meet with Mr. Guy to support him.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Dr. H. Clements moved:

That the Assembly:

- (7) Request the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury to see that any person who has reported alleged sexual harassment at Auburn has the direct offer of appropriate counselling.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. G.N. Guy was removed from the Bar until the resumption of the debate on petition (v).

The debate was adjourned (Min. 135).

135. Petition (v): The Assembly resumed debate on petition (v) (Min. 130).

The petitioner was recalled to the bar.

The Rev. P.W. Hastie moved:

That the Assembly:

- (8) In its decision to dissolve the pastoral tie of the Rev. G.N. Guy with the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe, based its decision exclusively on the irretrievable breakdown of relationships that occurred between the minister and the congregation, the financial non-viability of the Parish, and independent of any allegations of sexual abuse within the Auburn-North Lidcombe Parish.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. P.A. Davidson moved:

That the Assembly:

- (9) As an expression of its pastoral concern for the Parish of Auburn-North Lidcombe, affirm its confidence in the Interim Moderator and the Presbytery of the Hawkesbury, as they become involved in the healing process in the congregation.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Issue the following press release:

The State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W. on Thursday 3 July, 1997, confirmed an earlier decision to remove the Rev. G.N. Guy from ministry in the Auburn-North Lidcombe Parish. The decision was based on what the Assembly considered to be an "irretrievable breakdown of the pastoral relationship", coupled with severe financial problems in the Parish. The Assembly strongly rejected Mr. Guy's claim that he was the victim of efforts to silence his exposure of an alleged sexual abuse case within his Parish. The Presbyterian Church was recently praised in the Police Royal Commission for its production of the document "Breaking the Silence", which details procedures in handling alleged cases of sexual abuse.

The motion was seconded.

The Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved.

The Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith moved:

That the Assembly:

- (10) Affirm its confidence in the Pastoral Relations Commission in its handling of the matter.

The motion was seconded and approved.
The Rev. J.F. Ransom recorded his dissent.
The Rev. R.P.F. Benn moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the Moderator, in the presence of all the commissioners to urge the Rev. G.N. Guy to accept and heed the judgement of the Assembly, and to recognise the distinct possibility that for him the voice of the church may indeed be the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The competence of the motion was challenged.

The Moderator ruled the motion incompetent.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(11) Appoint the Rev. W. Hicks and Dr. R.S. Keith as respondents for the Assembly in the matter of the Appeal of the Rev. G.N. Guy to the General Assembly of Australia.

The petitioner was recalled to the bar and informed of the decisions of the Assembly.

The petitioner was removed from the bar.

136. Privileges of the Assembly: The Rev. J.F. Boyall raised a Question of Privilege.

The Rev. J.F. Boyall moved:

That the Assembly:

Declare that the privilege of this court is infringed when there are comments to the press concerning a matter which is under judicial consideration, releasing information not released to the commissioners, and pleading the case apart from the proper judicial procedure.

The motion was seconded.

The Assembly requested the opinion of the Procurator on the matter.

The Procurator gave his opinion.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the motion of the Rev. J.F. Boyall be referred to the Business Committee in consultation with the Code Committee, for consideration and report to the 1998 Assembly.

137. Question of Privilege: The Rev. G.N. Guy raised a Question of Privilege. The Moderator ruled the matter would be considered with that raised by the Rev. J.F. Boyall.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Extracted from the records of the N.S.W., General Assembly this 15th day of July, 1997, by me.

PAUL G. LOGAN

....., Clerk.

COMMUNICATION

(viii) From the N.S.W. General Assembly concerning studies at Moore Theological College.

The Clerk of Assembly,
Presbyterian Church of Australia,
GPO Box 100,
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Dear Sir,

22 July 1997

I wish to advise the General Assembly of Australia of the following resolution of the 1997 N.S.W. General Assembly. (B.B. 1997 Min. 21(6))

That the Assembly:

- (6) Advise the General Assembly of Australia of its desire that:
- (a) the GAA grant approval to the College Committee to treat candidates at Moore College, and those enrolling in years up to and including the year of the next meeting of the GAA, under the terms of Regulation 10 (Special Cases).
 - (b) the College Committee be requested to grant credit from BTh and some additional subjects of the course of training for candidates for the ministry for studies undertaken at Moore College, provided that the first year of the course is undertaken full-time at the PTC, and part-time study is undertaken at the PTC in subsequent years of candidature.
 - (c) where a student becomes a candidate subsequent to commencing studies at Moore College, such a candidate be required to undertake one full-time year or equivalent at the PTC (on completion of his studies at Moore College) and a minimum of one part-time year (which may be concurrent with his studies at Moore College).
 - (d) such approval be subject to the supervision of the College Committee of the GAA and subject to administrative arrangements as made by the appropriate bodies in the NSW Church.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL LOGAN,
Clerk of Assembly

pjl.shj

(ix) From APWM concerning Petition (i).

The Clerk of Assembly,
Presbyterian Church of Australia,
GPO Box 100,
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Dear Dr. Logan,

22 July 1997

A.P.W.M. wishes to inform the General Assembly of Australia that it is in full agreement with the sentiments expressed in Petition (i) from the Queensland Assembly by way of the World Committee on Evangelism regarding Aboriginal ministry but that it believes this ministry should remain under the administration of APWM rather than setting up another committee.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Pilgrim
Convener, APWM

(x) From the Reformed Churches of Australia concerning future discussions.

Dr. Paul Logan
Clerk of Assembly
Presbyterian Church of Australia
PO Box 100
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Dr. Logan,

Greeting in the Name of the Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ!

Further to my telephone conversation with Dr. Allan Harman this morning, I wish to bring you greetings from the Reformed Churches of Australia and advise you of some of the decisions of our recently held Synod in Blacktown, NSW (August 18-28, 1997).

Our Synod expressed a clear and positive desire to explore an appropriate and mutually agreed level of ecclesiastical relationship. We noted that on several areas there is now significant cooperation between our two denominations, namely:

- Both the Reformed Churches of Australia (RCA) and the Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA) hold membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Council. At the Grand Rapids Assembly (June, 1996) representatives of the RCA (Dr. Henk de Waard and myself) enjoyed wonderful fellowship and noteworthy unity with the PCA representative, Dr. Allan Harman.
- In the Maclean area of New South Wales, RCA Home Missionary John Zylstra works closely with a congregation of the PCA in Lawrence. John is currently working among the indigenous peoples in the Maclean and Yamba district.
- In Tasmania regular meetings between ministers in the Hobart area continue to be fruitful. Fellowship evenings for Elders and Ministers, Preaching workshops, combined Pentecost services, as well as jointly coordinated and produced Reformation celebrations give visible expression to the unity we have in the Lord Jesus Christ and testify to our shared Presbyterian/Reformed heritage.

Where our two denominations are already enjoying such cooperation and where our respective confessional commitment are so similar we believe the RCA and the PCA should be taking every opportunity to recognise one another formally and explore further opportunities for joint action and witness.

Accordingly, our recent Synod approved the following recommendations from our Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER):

To correspond with the PCA National Assembly, requesting they appoint a committee for dialogue with our CER with a view to:

Identifying areas we have in common with the PCA, taking into account work already done in the Classes;

Identifying impediments, if any, to formalising ecclesiastical relationship with them;

Recommend to the next Synod as to whether or not a formal relationship is warranted (Art 65.8.1-3).

We pray the Lord will lead your Assembly to respond positively to our request. The Lord's harvest field is ripe, and we believe increased cooperation and communication would be of great mutual benefit as we seek to bear the responsibilities of Kingdom witness.

We also hope there will be an opportunity for us to send an observer to your Assembly. We note that Dr. Henk de Waard will be in attendance in the capacity of President of the Reformed Ecumenical Council. Should it also be acceptable to you, Rev. Leo Douma, currently serving our North Ryde congregation, has been asked by our Committee for Ecumenical Relations to attend your meetings.

May the Sovereign King of the Church bless your Assembly with unity and grace!
Yours in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ,

DAVID GROENENBOOM, Ecumenical Secretary.

DISSENT AND COMPLAINT

(i) From the Rev. F. Avent against a decision of the N.S.W. General Assembly.

I, Frank Avent, dissent and complain to the Venerable the General Assembly of Australia against the decision of the New South Wales General Assembly on the 4th July, 1997 (N.S.W. G.A. 74) to overture the General Assembly of Australia anent the celebration of the sacraments in certain circumstances by elders on the following grounds:-

2. In the proceedings leading to the approval of the overture an amendment designed to restrict the possible authorisation of an elder to celebrate the sacraments to male elders only was incorrectly ruled by the Moderator to be incompetent on the grounds that such a restriction was in conflict with the G.A.A. declaration in September, 1967 that "the Eldership is a service within the Church which can be performed appropriately by men and women." The Moderator's ruling, after dissent was recorded, was upheld by vote of the Assembly. This erroneous ruling infringed the rights of commissioners, inhibited debate on vital issues concerning the overture, and prejudiced the conclusion supported by the Assembly. The reason given by the complainant on dissenting from the Moderator's ruling was that the amendment merely sought to restrict the granting of authority by the Assembly for the celebration of the sacraments to a particular class of persons, however narrowly defined, and had nothing to say on the general question of who might appropriately serve as elders in accordance with the 1967 declaration.
3. The overture in its present form is incompetent in that it fails to take account of the 1991 additional Article of Agreement which states that "Only men shall be eligible for admission to the ministry of Word and Sacraments...". By failing to restrict the celebration of the sacraments to male elders the overture contradicts the spirit and intention of that Article in that the authority sought is or the exercise of a provisional ministry of an emergency nature which ought to bear as far as possible the marks and character of the ministry normally exercised only by "...a Minister of the Word lawfully ordained." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27, Section 4).

Frank Avent - 13th July, 1997

Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales

EXTRACT MINUTE

At Croydon and within the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney on Friday the 4th day of July, 1997 at 2 p.m., the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W. met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with prayer.

Among other things:

170. Overture (viii): The Assembly resumed consideration of Overture (viii) (Min. 98).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. S.J. Clements moved:

That the Assembly:

(1) Overture the General Assembly of Australia in the following terms:

To the Venerable, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia:

Whereas:

- A. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27, Section 4 reads:
"There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ the Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully ordained".

- B. The General Assembly of Australia has amended the Westminster Confession of Faith by the addition of the words:
"Saving where the General Assembly has made special provision to the contrary that the people of God may not be left without these sealing ordinances".
- C. The General Assembly of Australia has made provision that certain persons employed by various Assembly committees may be authorised to celebrate the sacraments, such persons often being entitled "home missionaries".
- D. It is now the case that many home mission stations can no longer afford to pay a home missionary and are being ministered to by elders, particularly in rural areas.
- E. Many new areas in need of a minister can afford to employ neither an ordained minister nor a home missionary, but elders retired from their previous occupations are available to act as missionaries in such areas and do not need to be paid the equivalent of a full stipend.
- F. These elders preach and perform pastoral duties as would an ordained minister or a home missionary, but they are not now permitted to celebrate the sacraments.
- G. The number of ordained ministers is not keeping pace with the increase in population, and as a result there is difficulty in obtaining ordained ministers to celebrate the sacraments on a regular basis in districts where elders are ministering, and it is not fitting that people should be deprived of the sacraments.
- H. It is desirable that the regular preacher in a congregation should also celebrate the sacraments in that congregation.

Now therefore the N.S.W. General Assembly humbly overtures the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and enlarge the declaration embodied in 5.2 of its "Constitution, Procedure and Practice" by adding the following words:

Elders set apart by a presbytery to perform special pastoral work in either a home mission station or an area requiring missionary activity to commence and develop a church, may be authorised by the presbytery to celebrate the sacraments.

Presbyteries are counselled to exercise care so that only elders proven by service to be suitable to take special responsibilities are appointed and given the right to celebrate the sacraments.

The rights, privileges and responsibilities of a minister inducted to a charge where an elder is engaged in development work are not to be curtailed. Likewise, the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a moderator of a home mission station where an elder is performing special work are not to be curtailed.

Before a presbytery authorises an elder set apart for special duties to celebrate the sacraments it must appoint a tutor to assist the elder in understanding the Doctrines of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It must further set an examination and be satisfied that the elder understands the doctrines. The areas for study and examination shall be:

- 4. The Confession of Faith, chapters 25, 28 and 29.
 - 5. The Shorter Catechism, Questions 88, 91 and 97.
 - 6. The Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- In administering the sacraments the elders shall consult and use the forms in "The Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia" or "The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland."

The elders shall not celebrate the sacraments except in their sphere of work and on occasions fixed by the Kirk Session.

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice Dr. P.E. Lush moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Add another recital after "F" as follows:

"From time to time, situations arise where an ordained minister is unable to attend a scheduled service of the Lord's Supper or Baptism;"

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. F. Avent moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Before the word "elders" where first appearing in the substance of the Overture, insert the word "male" so that the Overture will read "male elders set apart ..."

The competence of the amendment was challenged.

The Moderator ruled the amendment incompetent.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

Pursuant to notice Dr. P.E. Lush moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Add the words, "vacant charge," to the sentence "Elders set apart..."; so that it will read, "...in either a home mission station, vacant charge, or an area..."

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice Dr. P.E. Lush moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

(a) Delete the word "presbytery" from "may be authorised by the presbytery", and replace it by "ordained minister or interim moderator of the bounds."

(b) Add another sentence after "celebrate the sacraments", and before "Presbyteries...", to read, "The minister or interim Moderator of the bounds shall be responsible to Presbytery for the manner in which these sacraments are celebrated, and all such cases are to be duly reported to the Presbytery".

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice Dr. P.E. Lush moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete the paragraph, "The rights, privileges and responsibilities..."

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice Dr. P.E. Lush moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete the paragraph, "Before a presbytery authorises an elder..."

The amendment was seconded and approved.

171. Suspension of Standing Orders: It was moved, seconded and agreed that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Rev. R.G. Swavley to move his Notice of Motion.

172. Overture (viii): Pursuant to notice the Rev. R.G. Swavley moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Amend the plea of the proposed overture as follows:

(a) Add the words, "for a stated time" to the sentence, "Elders set apart ...", by a presbytery to perform, for a stated time, special pastoral work ..."

(b) Insert "(I)" to the sentence, "Presbyteries are counselled ...", so that it will read, "Presbyteries are counselled to exercise, (I) care..."

(c) Add to the end of that same paragraph, "(II) wisdom in setting the term." so that it will read, "...sacraments, (II) wisdom in setting the term."

The amendment was seconded and disapproved.

173. Standing Orders Resumed: It was moved, seconded and agreed that Standing Orders be resumed.

174. Overture (viii): The motion as amended was approved.

The Rev. F. Avent recorded his dissent and protested for leave to complain to the General Assembly of Australia.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Rev. D.A. Burke and P.F. Cooper be appointed as respondents for the Assembly in the matter of the dissent and complaint of the Rev. F. Avent against a decision of the Assembly, to the General Assembly of Australia.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. S.J. Clements moved:

That the Assembly:

(2) Appoint the Rev. S.J. Clements and J.A. McClean to state the overture to the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Extracted from the records of the N.S.W., General Assembly this 15th day of July, 1997, by me.

PAUL G. LOGAN

....., Clerk.

OVERTURES

(v) From the Presbytery of the Hunter concerning the Questions asked of Communicants and Adherents at Induction Services.

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia:

- Whereas an induction service rightly emphasizes the faith and intentions of the minister the same service can also serve to indicate to the minister the faith of the Congregation and the support which the Congregation might offer him, and
- Whereas the first question asked of communicants and adherents of the Congregation *Do you, the members and adherents of this congregation, adhere to the call which you have already subscribed in favour of Mr ... to be your minister?* gives the communicants and adherents the opportunity to confirm the agreement they determined, when they subscribed to the Call, and
- Whereas the second question asked of communicants and adherents of the Congregation *Do you now cordially receive him as your Minister, promising to provide for him suitable maintenance, and give him all due respect, encouragement and obedience in the Lord* gives members and adherents the scope to confirm their support for the minister, and
- Whereas these, being the only questions asked of the communicants and adherents to make any declaration of their faith publicly and in the presence of the minister-elect, and
- Whereas a service of induction offers a suitable occasion for the communicants and adherents of the Congregation to declare publicly their faith as a confirmation of belief and as a public indication to the minister-elect, and
- Whereas there is no place in the induction service for the communicants and adherents of the Congregation to indicate their faith, and
- Whereas the minister-elect has the opportunity to declare his faith (Question (i)) to acknowledge his acceptance of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Question (ii)), to own and accept purity of Presbyterian worship (Question (iii)), to assert his desire to glorify God (Question (iv)) and to live a holy and circumspect life (Question (viii)) among other things, and
- Whereas it is not necessary for communicants and adherents of the Congregation to answer the same question as the minister-elect, and
- Whereas it would be a powerful witness before God for the communicants and adherents to make a public declaration of their faith in the presence of everyone gathered for the induction, and
- Whereas as it is good for all Christians to take every opportunity to re-affirm their faith and good for them to do so publicly as well as privately to strengthen their faith and to witness for God to others,
- Now therefore the Presbytery of the Hunter humbly overtures the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia to take these premises into account and agree to the request of the Presbytery of the Hunter to include in services for the Induction of Ministers as a question to be asked of communicants and adherents: *Do you affirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?*

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

D. M. SMITH, Clerk.

The Rev. J.E. Webster and D.M. Smith were appointed to state the overture.

Forwarded by the N.S.W. General Assembly without comment.

(vi) **From the N.S.W. General Assembly concerning elders celebrating the Sacraments.**

To the Venerable General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia:

WHEREAS:

- H. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27, Section 4 reads:
"There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ the Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully ordained".
- B. The General Assembly of Australia has amended the Westminster Confession of Faith by the addition of the words:
"Saving where the General Assembly has made special provision to the contrary that the people of God may not be left without these sealing ordinances".
- C. The General Assembly of Australia has made provision that certain persons employed by various Assembly committees may be authorised to celebrate the sacraments, such persons often being entitled "home missionaries".
- D. It is now the case that many home mission stations can no longer afford to pay a home missionary and are being ministered to by elders, particularly in rural areas.
- E. Many new areas in need of a minister can afford to employ neither an ordained minister nor a home missionary, but elders retired from their previous occupations are available to act as missionaries in such areas and do not need to be paid the equivalent of a full stipend.
- F. These elders preach and perform pastoral duties as would an ordained minister or a home missionary, but they are not now permitted to celebrate the sacraments.
- G. From time to time, situations arise where an ordained minister is unable to attend a scheduled service of the Lord's Supper of Baptism.
- H. The number of ordained minister is not keeping pace with the increase in population, and as a result there is difficulty in obtaining ordained ministers to celebrate the sacraments on a regular basis in districts where elders are ministering, and it is not fitting that people should be deprived of the sacraments.
- I. It is desirable that the regular preacher in a congregation should also celebrate the sacraments in that congregation.

Now therefore the N.S.W. General Assembly humbly overtures the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and enlarge the declaration embodied in 5.2 of its "Constitution, Procedure and Practice" by adding the following words:

Elders set apart by a presbytery to perform special pastoral work in either a home mission station, vacant charge, or an area requiring missionary activity to commence and develop a church, may be authorised by the ordained minister or interim moderator of the bounds to celebrate the sacraments.

The minister or interim moderator of the bounds shall be responsible to Presbytery for the manner in which these sacraments are celebrated and all such cases are to be duly reported to the Presbytery.

Presbyteries are counselled to exercise care so that only elders proven by service to be suitable to take special responsibilities are appointed and given the right to celebrate the sacraments.

In administering the sacraments the elders shall consult and use the forms in "The Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia" or "The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland."

The elders shall not celebrate the sacraments except in their sphere of work and on occasions fixed by the Kirk Session.

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. S. J. Clements and J. A. McClean were appointed to state the overture.

(vii) **From the Code Committee concerning the Articles of Agreement.**

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS:

- A. The Presbyterian Church of Australia ("the Church") was formed on 24 July 1901 as a federation of the State Presbyterian Churches upon an agreed constitution comprising:
 - (a) the Basis of Union - the doctrinal basis of the Church, and
 - (b) the Articles of Agreement ("the Articles") - the system of government of the Church.
- B. Article XIII of the Articles provides that the Articles may be altered or added to from time to time, but not without the consent of the majority of the presbyteries of the whole Church and a majority of the local assemblies.
- C. The Articles have been altered and added to from time to time since 1901 pursuant to Article XIII.
- D. It is now time for a thorough review of the Articles to take account of changes in society and in the administration and practice of the Church since 1901, so that the Church may enter the new millennium with revised Articles.
- E. The 1994 General Assembly of Australia resolved to authorise the Code Committee to undertake a revision of the Articles and request presbyteries and State assemblies to submit comments on proposed revisions to the Convener of the Code Committee by 31 October 1995 (BB 1994 19(3)).
- F. Proposed changes to the Articles as prepared by the Code Committee were sent to presbyteries, State assemblies and GAA standing committees for comment in 1995. After taking into account all submissions and comments received by January 1996, an amended draft of proposed amended Articles as prepared by the Code Committee was again circulated to all presbyteries, State assemblies and GAA standing committees. All further submissions and comments were considered by the Code Committee in February 1997.
- G. Following upon this extensive process of consultation within the Church, the Code Committee has resolved that the proposed amended Articles are now in a form suitable for submission to that GAA and, if approved, to be sent down to presbyteries and State assemblies under the Barrier Act procedure contained in Article XIII.

NOW THEREFORE the Code Committee humbly overtures the General Assembly of Australia to take these premises into consideration and to alter and add to the existing Articles of Agreement, an annotated copy of which is contained in Annexure A to this Overture so that the amended Articles of Agreement would be in the form as follows:

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

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3. General Assembly.
4. Powers of the General Assembly.
5. Commission of Assembly.
6. Committees of the General Assembly.
7. Mission.
8. Defence Forces Chaplains.
9. Theological Training.
10. Reception of Ministers.
11. Home Missions.
12. Powers of State Assemblies.
13. Financial Issues.
14. Insurance.
15. Assessors.
16. Regulations.

17. Amendment to Articles.
18. Transitional.
19. Definitions.

1. General Assembly

1.1 There shall be a Supreme Court of the Church which shall be called the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

1.2 The General Assembly shall meet in such places as it shall determine. The General Assembly shall endeavour to arrange its business so as to meet once each three years, but may meet more or less frequently if it so decides from time to time. At the conclusion of a session of the General Assembly the General Assembly adjourns until its next meeting.

1.3 The General Assembly shall consist of:

- (a) an equal number of ministers and elders elected pursuant to Articles 1.4 and 1.5;
- (b) the Officers of the General Assembly as appointed pursuant to Article 1.7 (any who is not a minister or elder does not have power to vote); and
- (c) the past Moderators of the General Assembly.

1.4 Each State Assembly shall elect one minister and one elder for every sixteen Sanctioned Charges or portion thereof within its bounds. A State Assembly may elect alternates to take the place of a member who may be unable to attend. The Clerk of the State Assembly shall notify the Clerk in writing prior to the opening of the General Assembly of the commissioners from that State Assembly.

1.5 Each Presbytery shall elect from within its bounds one minister and one elder for every five Sanctioned Charges or portion thereof within its bounds. A Presbytery may elect alternates as in the case of State Assemblies. The Clerk of Presbytery shall notify the Clerk in writing prior to the opening of the General Assembly of the commissioners from that Presbytery.

1.6 The following persons shall have all the rights of members of the General Assembly (except the right to vote if not a minister or elder) while the Assembly is discussing the reports (including deliverances) of their respective committees if they have not been commissioned as members of the General Assembly:

- (a) conveners of General Assembly committees in presenting their reports; and
- (b) the office-bearers holding full-time appointments made or authorised by the General Assembly, such as the National World Mission Co-ordinator of APWM, the Superintendent of the Presbyterian Inland Mission and the Editor of the national journal.

1.7 The General Assembly shall in accordance with its regulations appoint the following who shall be the Officers of the Assembly:

Moderator (who shall be referred to as Moderator-General in distinction from the moderators of State Assemblies); Clerk; Deputy Clerk; Business Convener; Procurator; Law Agent.

1.8 A meeting of the General Assembly to deal with special unforeseen business may be convened by the Moderator on a requisition from not fewer than thirty members who are drawn from not less than four States. The Moderator shall determine the place and time of meeting and not less than 30 days notice of the meeting and the business to be transacted shall be given by the Clerk. The business is not proceeded with unless:

- (a) a quorum is present, and
- (b) the action of the requisitionists and of the Moderator in convening the meeting is approved by the General Assembly as convened.

2. Powers of the General Assembly

2.1 The General Assembly shall have powers legislative, administrative and judicial, which powers shall be supreme with respect to:

- (a) doctrine of the Church;
- (b) worship of the Church;
- (c) discipline of the Church;
- (d) the training of students for service in the Church (including training for the ministry, deaconess training and other training areas as determined by the General Assembly);
- (e) the admission of candidates to the ministry;
- (f) the reception of ministers from other Churches;
- (g) overseas mission;
- (h) home mission, particularly in inland or other sparsely settled areas, at the request of or in conjunction with a State Assembly;
- (i) relations with
 - (i) the national bodies of other churches in Australia, and
 - (ii) overseas churches;
- (j) the publication of a national journal;
- (k) Christian education; and
- (l) chaplains to the defence forces.

2.2 In the exercise of its legislative powers under Article 2.1 where the Assembly proposes to enact a Rule (including repeal or amendment of a Rule), the General Assembly shall be bound by Barrier Act procedure. In the Church such procedure requires the approval of a majority of the State Assemblies and a majority of the Presbyteries before the General Assembly may enact such a Rule as binding and effective, but subject to Article 2.3.

2.3 If the General Assembly resolves to remit under the Barrier Act procedure referred

to in Article 2.2 a proposed new Rule (including repeal or amendment of a Rule), the General Assembly may by further resolution which is approved by not less than two thirds of those present and voting grant interim authority in which case the proposed new Rule shall take effect from the close of that meeting of the General Assembly to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

2.4 For the purposes of Article 2.2 the failure by a Presbytery or a State Assembly to respond to a remit shall be deemed to be approval of that remit.

3. Commission of the General Assembly

3.1 A Commission of the General Assembly may be convened as specified in Article 3.6 with the following powers and duties:

- (a) to deal with and determine each matter referred to it by the General Assembly, and
- (b) to consider and determine any other matter or issue and to take such action, being of a kind which would normally be dealt with by the General Assembly but which because of its urgent nature requires prompt executive or judicial action.

3.2 The Commission of Assembly shall:

- (a) act in the interest of the Church on every occasion so that the Church does not suffer or sustain any prejudice or harm which can be prevented;
- (b) observe all instructions given to the Commission by the General Assembly;
- (c) act in all its proceedings in accordance with the rules and constitution of the Church;
- (d) be accountable to and censurable by the General Assembly as the Assembly shall see fit;
- (e) refrain from enacting, amending or repealing any rules or regulations of the General Assembly; or entering into a consideration of any overture or motion proposing legislation;
- (f) deal only with matters specified in Article 3.1(a) and (b); and
- (g) submit its minutes duly confirmed and all relevant papers to the next meeting of the General Assembly through the Clerk.

3.3 The membership of the Commission of Assembly shall be as follows:

- (a) the Moderator, who shall be chairman;
- (b) the other Assembly Officers;
- (c) all past Moderators of the General Assembly;
- (d) members from the States as follows:

	Ministers	Elders
New South Wales	4	4
Victoria	3	3
Queensland	2	2
South Australia	1	1
Western Australia	1	1
Tasmania	1	1

- 3.4 The State Assembly shall appoint members of the Commission from that State. These appointments shall continue until such time as the State Assembly makes new appointments, it being intended that there should always be designated members to the Commission from each State Assembly. Any vacancy which may occur shall be filled by the State Assembly or on behalf of the State Assembly of the relevant State in such manner as the State Assembly may direct.
- 3.5 The quorum for a Commission of Assembly shall be 16 members drawn from at least four of the States, at least eight of whom are members pursuant to Article 3.3(d).
- 3.6 The Moderator shall convene the Commission of Assembly:
- (a) when so appointed by the General Assembly,
 - (b) when requested so to do by a quorum of the members of the Commission, or
 - (c) on his own direction.

The Commission shall meet at such time and in such location as the Moderator determines.

- 3.7 The Clerk shall take all steps which may be necessary or desirable to arrange for any meeting of the Commission of Assembly.

4. Committees

- 4.1 The General Assembly may establish standing committees to carry out the work of the General Assembly in their respective areas including the following:
- (a) Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee
 - (b) Business Committee
 - (c) Christian Education Committee
 - (d) Church and Nation Committee
 - (e) College Committee
 - (f) Code Committee
 - (g) Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee
 - (h) Finance Committee
 - (i) Moderator's Nominating Committee
 - (j) National Journal Committee
 - (k) Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee
 - (l) Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee
 - (m) Reception of Ministers Committee
 - (n) Relations with Other Churches Committee.

- 4.2 The General Assembly may appoint special committees to carry out such tasks as determined from time to time by the General Assembly. Such committees cease at the conclusion of the next meeting of the General Assembly unless the Assembly

reappoints the Committee for a further term.

5. Mission

5.1 Australian Presbyterian World Mission shall give effect to the responsibility of the General Assembly in respect of initiating and supporting mission. This will involve the support of missionaries who are working:

- (a) with accredited mission societies approved in accordance with regulations approved by the General Assembly; and
- (b) directly under the authority of the Church either overseas or in Australia.

5.2 It shall be the responsibility of APWM to:-

- (a) publicise and carry through the General Assembly's policy in regard to the missionary service and outreach of the Church;
- (b) enter on behalf of the General Assembly into formal relationships and agreements with other churches and mission bodies in respect of missionary activity with such churches and bodies;
- (c)
 - (i) establish and maintain partnership relationships for missionary activity with approved overseas churches, and
 - (ii) negotiate on behalf of the General Assembly with approved mission bodies and members of the Church working with them, to establish working agreements and to encourage support;
- (d) encourage at all levels of the Church's life, especially at the level of the congregation, an enlightened and wholehearted personal commitment to the missionary task of the Church; and
- (e) oversee and initiate the expansion of mission work to new areas and unreached people groups. If such work is to take place within the bounds of a Presbytery APWM must seek and obtain the prior approval of that Presbytery.

6. Defence Forces Chaplains

6.1 The Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee shall administer the authority of the General Assembly in respect of defence forces. In particular the Committee shall nominate, discharge and control chaplains in the Australian Defence Forces both at home or abroad.

6.2 The General Assembly may delegate such portions of its authority in this area as it shall deem fit to the relevant chaplaincy committees of the State Assemblies. The Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee shall co-operate with those committees and the State Assemblies in all matters conducive to the satisfactory conduct and control of the work of the Defence Forces Chaplains.

7. Theological Training

7.1 There shall be a course of training for the ministry of Word and Sacraments which shall be supervised by the College Committee.

- 7.2 The General Assembly shall determine the course of training, together with the prerequisites for entry to the course.
- 7.3 The College Committee shall admit candidates for the ministry to the course of training, grade students throughout the course, approve syllabi, conduct examinations as necessary, and issue certificates (known as exit certificates) on completion of the course of training.
- 7.4 The State Assemblies shall administer the course of training through the operation of such theological halls or colleges as:
- (a) are recognised pursuant to Article 7.5, and
 - (b) may be recognised from time to time by the General Assembly.
- 7.5 The theological colleges and halls recognised for the training of candidates for the ministry shall be:
- (a) in Queensland - the Presbyterian Theological Hall,
 - (b) in NSW - the Presbyterian Theological Centre, and
 - (c) in Victoria - the Presbyterian Theological College.
- 7.6 Each State Assembly operating a theological hall or college shall appoint professors or lecturers, together with a faculty and a committee to administer each such hall or college.
- 7.7 The course of training shall consist of a theological course, at degree standard, whose subjects are prescribed in regulations approved by the General Assembly after receiving advice from the College Committee.
- 7.8 A Presbytery shall not license a candidate for the ministry until the candidate has been issued by the College Committee with an exit certificate which certifies that all requirements of the College Committee have been met by the candidate.
- 7.9 Only men shall be eligible for admission to the ministry of Word and Sacraments in the Church and all rules and regulations of the General Assembly and services of ordination shall be construed that reference therein to ministers of the Word and Sacraments shall refer only to men.
8. Reception of Ministers
- 8.1 The Reception of Ministers Committee deals with applications by ministers and licentiates (or equivalent) of other denominations to be received as ministers of the Church.
- 8.2 Ministers and licentiates from denominations which are not presbyterian who seek to be accepted as ministers of the Church may be admitted only by the General Assembly.
- 8.3 Ministers and licentiates from other presbyterian churches who seek to be accepted as ministers of the Church may be admitted by:
- (a) the General Assembly,

(b) a State Assembly if so authorised by the General Assembly, or

(c) the Reception of Ministers Committee

in accordance with Regulations enacted by the General Assembly so as to secure uniformity of method of admission.

8.4. The Reception of Ministers Committee shall upon the presentation of a certificate of status from the church in which they have been serving and a certificate of good conduct from APWM receive as ministers of the Church:

(a) ministers who were previously ministers of the Church who have undertaken missionary service under the authority of APWM and have put themselves under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church within which they are working, and

(b) ministers who were previously licentiates of the Church who have undertaken missionary service under the authority of APWM and have placed themselves under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church within which they are working and who received ordination within that Church.

9. Co-operative Action with State Assemblies

9.1 Each State Assembly may at its discretion and shall if so required by the General Assembly report to the General Assembly on issues pertaining to the work and welfare of the Church within the jurisdiction of that State Assembly.

9.2 The General Assembly shall consider such reports, and issue any recommendations, when that is deemed advisable, with regard to them.

9.3 The General Assembly may, in conjunction with the relevant State Assembly, originate new home mission schemes and take such steps as it may think fit to raise money and otherwise assist the home mission operations of any State Church.

10. Powers of State Assemblies

10.1 The autonomy of the State Assemblies shall not be further interfered with than is necessary to give effect to the Basis of Union and the Articles of Agreement.

11. Financial Issues

11.1 The Finance Committee shall manage the finances of the General Assembly.

11.2 A fund shall be formed in order to pay for:

(a) the working expenses of the General Assembly (including its committees and officers), and

(b) such part of the travelling and accommodation expenses of its members as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.

The State Assemblies shall contribute to this fund in such proportions as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.

11.3 Subject to any determination of the General Assembly, the Finance Committee may authorise the handling of financial functions of the General Assembly by one or more

State Assemblies, including the trustees and/or administrative officers of a State Church.

- 11.4 The General Assembly may establish trustees to hold and deal with any property of the Church including the General Assembly and its committees. The General Assembly may in addition authorise incorporation for similar purposes if thought desirable by the General Assembly.
- 11.5 The General Assembly may establish a superannuation scheme and/or a long service leave scheme for the benefit of ministers of the Church. In particular the General Assembly may form or incorporate schemes for these purposes and may:
- (a) require ministers of the Church to contribute to any such scheme,
 - (b) require congregations with a minister to contribute to the scheme in respect of ministers of that congregations,
 - (c) require State Assemblies or committees of the Church or a State Assembly employing a minister to contribute in respect of that minister,
 - (d) determine the amount of contributions, and
 - (e) enact Regulations in respect of the operation of the scheme.
- 11.6 No minister within the jurisdiction of a State Assembly connected with or liable to join a beneficiary, provident or superannuation fund or long service leave fund thereof shall be required to contribute to any such scheme of the General Assembly without the consent of the State Assembly.
- 11.7 The General Assembly may in co-operation with the State Assemblies seek to promote uniformity within the State Churches as to the conditions of service for Ministers, particularly in respect of the transfer of Ministers from one State to another State.

12. Insurance

- 12.1 The General Assembly may co-operate with the authorities of State Churches for joint or federal control or mutual association in respect of effecting insurance of all kinds.
- 12.2 Unless otherwise determined by the Assembly, the Finance Committee shall be responsible for pursuing insurance issues as referred to in Article 12.1.

13. Assessors

- 13.1 At each ordinary meeting the General Assembly shall elect from amongst its members 8 ministers and 8 elders to be a body of assessors, who shall be able to assist any presbytery or State Assembly which may seek their assistance in any matter.
- 13.2 The presbytery or State Assembly shall request such assistance of the Moderator who shall appoint at least 3 but not more than 6 assessors from among the body of assessors.

14. Rules and Regulations

- 14.1 In the exercise of powers conferred on the General Assembly by Article 2.1, the General Assembly may make Rules and/or Regulations from time to time including but not limited to:
- (a) standing orders for meetings of the General Assembly,
 - (b) regulations for the establishment and functioning of committees of the General Assembly as provided for under Article 4,
 - (c) regulations regarding Officers of the General Assembly as appointed under Article 1.7, and
 - (d) rules for the exercise of discipline in the Church.
- 14.2 The General Assembly may by separate resolution or within such Rules or Regulations prescribe procedures for the amendment repeal or replacement of specified Rules or Regulations.
15. Amendment to Articles
- 15.1 The General Assembly by resolution expressed to be pursuant to this Article may repeal, amend or add to these Articles of Agreement from time to time, but not without the prior consent of the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church and a majority of the State Assemblies.
- 15.2 If the General Assembly resolves to remit to State Assemblies and Presbyteries a proposed alteration to these Articles, a record shall be taken and recorded in the minutes of the General Assembly of the numbers voting for and against, and of those present but not voting, in respect of such resolution.
- 15.3 For the purposes of Article 15.1, the failure by a Presbytery or a State Assembly to respond to a remit shall be deemed to be disapproval of that remit.
16. Transitional
- 16.1 The enactment of these Articles does not affect the validity of any decision of the General Assembly made pursuant to the Articles of Agreement in force prior to the enactment of these Articles.
- 16.2 All administrative arrangements of the General Assembly, including the appointment of committees and enactment of Rules and Regulations, made pursuant to the Articles of Agreement in force prior to the enactment of these Articles shall continue to apply in full force and effect but now subject to these Articles of Agreement.
17. Definitions
- 17.1 In these Articles of Agreement the following words shall have the meanings given:
- "Article" means an article of these articles of agreement.
- "APWM" means the committee of the General Assembly known as the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee.
- "Church" means the Presbyterian Church of Australia, being a federal union of the State Churches.

"Clerk" means the Clerk of the General Assembly.

"Clerks" means the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly.

"Regulation" means an enactment by the General Assembly to facilitate the administrative operation of the Assembly and/or its committees, which enactment is not a Rule.

"Rule" means an enactment by the General Assembly which creates binding obligations upon members of the Church generally and/or upon subordinate courts of the Church.

"Standing Committee" means a committee of the General Assembly established under Article 4.1.

"State Assembly" means the General Assembly of a State Church.

"State Church" means each of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Western Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania.

or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan and Mr. S.H. Fraser were appointed to state the Overture.

(Attached to the Overture is Annexure A - being copy of existing Articles marked with annotations.)

ANNEXURE A - EXISTING ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

- I There shall be a Supreme Court of the Church, which shall be called the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. [New Art. 1.1]
- II The General Assembly shall meet in such places as it shall itself determine, and it shall endeavour to arrange the business so as to meet only once in two years, but shall have power to meet oftener if found necessary; the place and time of the first meeting to be fixed by the Federal Assembly. [New Art. 1.2]
- 1903 Min. 67(1) 1916 Min. 68: 1962 Min. 122(5)(c): III The General Assembly shall be representative, and shall consist of an equal number of ministers and elders; elected as hereinafter provided. Each State Assembly shall elect one minister and one elder for every sixteen sanctioned charges or portion thereof within its bounds. A State Assembly may elect an alternate or alternates to take the place of a member or members who may be unable to attend, provided that any such change is certified by the Clerk of the State Assembly to the Clerk of the General Assembly prior to the opening of the General Assembly.
Each Presbytery shall elect one minister and one elder for every five sanctioned charges or portion thereof within its bounds. A presbytery may accept the resignation of a member or members who may be unable to attend, and elect another member or members, or may appoint alternates as in the case of State Assemblies, provided that any such change is certified by the Clerk of Presbytery to the Clerk of the General Assembly prior to the

opening of the General Assembly. Conveners of the General Assembly committees in presenting their reports, the office-bearers holding General Assembly appointments, such as the General Secretary and the Assistant Secretary of the Board of Missions, the Superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission, and the Chaplain-General, shall have all the rights of members of the General Assembly while the Assembly is discussing the report of their respective committees, when they have not been elected members of the General Assembly of Australia. [New Art. 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6]

1909 Min.
51:1928

IV The General Assembly shall have functions legislative, administrative, and judicial; supreme with respect to the doctrine, worship and discipline of the Church, the missions to the heathen, the training of students, the admission of candidates to the ministry, the reception of ministers from other churches, Christian Education, and home missions, and the publication of a National Church Journal in so far as hereinafter provided. [New Art. 2.1]

Min. 60,
1964 Min.
58(3);
1967 Min.
22(6)
(c)(i)

V The judicial functions of the General Assembly in the cases hereafter stated shall be delegated to a Commission to be appointed at each ordinary meeting of the General Assembly, and which shall be called the Judicial Commission of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, and hereinafter is called the judicial commission.

(a) The judicial commission shall hear all appeals to the General Assembly of Australia from State Assemblies in cases where a judicial process has been proposed, whether the decision has been for or against proceeding by such process, or where the decision on the case has been arrived at by a State Assembly in the course of judicial process. The decision of the Judicial Commission shall be final except in such cases where appeals or references involve the interpretation of Doctrine. In cases involving interpretation of Doctrine, the Judicial Commission shall hear the case and come to a preliminary judgement, which will not, however, take effect until it is reported to the General Assembly by whom it may be affirmed, reversed, varied or suspended. In this review, instead of a record of the case the finding of the facts only by the Judicial Commission shall be reported to the General Assembly, but the records shall be laid upon the table of the Assembly. The Clerk of the Commission shall be responsible for certifying and forwarding to the Clerk of the General Assembly the preliminary judgement with such documents as are necessary in the case. The members of the Judicial Commission shall take no part in this review by vote or otherwise in the General Assembly.

(b) The Judicial Commission shall also receive and deal with all references from a State Assembly where a judicial process has been proposed as above, or entered upon. In all appeals or references the Commission shall have authority to deal with the whole case so as to dispose of it finally, subject to the above right of the General Assembly in cases involving Doctrine.

(c) The Judicial Commission shall be summoned to meet at a convenient time and place by the Moderator or Acting-Moderator. The Chairman of the Judicial Commission in

each case shall be appointed by the Commission from among its own members at its first sitting, and until such appointment the Moderator or senior ex-Moderator present shall preside and constitute the Commission. Every decision of the Commission shall be deemed to be carried if a majority of the members of the Commission voting vote in favour of it. The Chairman shall have a deliberative, but no casting vote. If the voting be equal the Chairman shall declare the motion lost. Where a point of order is raised by any member of the Commission the Chairman shall give a preliminary ruling which shall then be put to, and determined by vote of, the Commission.

- (d) The Judicial Commission shall consist of 38 members, ministers and elders, 26 of whom shall be appointed on the nomination of the State Assemblies - 8 by the Assembly of Victoria, 8 by New South Wales, 4 by Queensland, 2 by Tasmania, 2 by South Australia and 2 by Western Australia, the remaining 12 by the General Assembly itself. Should an Assembly fail to nominate the General Assembly shall appoint in its stead; 16 shall form a quorum.
 - (e) The prosecutors in any case, or the appellants or respondents who plead at the bar of the Judicial Commission shall not, if they are members of the Commission, adjudicate in the case at any stage of the proceedings of the Judicial Commission. By prosecutors, appellants or respondents are to be understood those prosecuting or appealing or responding on their behalf, or acting on behalf of the lower court. [Article V omitted from New Articles]
- VI
- (a) The General Assembly, at each ordinary meeting, shall appoint a body of assessors, whose members shall be other than the members of the judicial commission, to assist any presbytery, or state assembly, which may seek their aid in conducting any case involving a question of life or doctrine. [New Art. 13.1]
 - (b) The request for such assistance shall be made to the Moderator or Acting-Moderator, who shall appoint the assessors from among the body of assessors. The number of assessors so appointed shall not be less than three or more than six. A certificate of appointment over the signature of the Moderator or Acting-Moderator shall be deemed proof of appointment. [New Art. 13.2]
- VII
- There shall be a Committee on Missions of the General Assembly entitled the Committee for Australian Presbyterian World Mission, formerly known as the Board of Missions and Ecumenical Relations. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee:
- (a) To enunciate and carry through the Assembly's policy in regard to the missionary service and outreach of the church to peoples of other cultures and other countries; [New Art. 5.2(a)]
 - (b) To enter on behalf of the Assembly, into formal relationships and agreements with other churches and mission bodies;

[New Art. 5.2(b)]

- (c) To establish and maintain partnership relationships with approved overseas churches; [New Art. 5.2(c)]
- (d) To establish relationships with overseas Churches worldwide and, where useful and possible, to work through them on behalf of the Assembly; [New Art. 5.2(c)]
- (e) To encourage at all levels of the church's life, especially at the level of the congregation, an enlightened and wholehearted personal commitment to the missionary task of the church; [New Art. 5.2(d)]
- (f) To negotiate on behalf of the Assembly with approved mission bodies and members of the Presbyterian Church working with them to establish dual membership agreements and to encourage support for our members so involved. [New Art. 5.2(c)(ii)]

1926 Min.
25(16)
1974 Min.
51 (2)
1991
Min. 75

VIII There shall be a system of theological training for the whole church, as follows:

- 1: All candidates for licence shall be students who have been regularly trained at some Theological Hall recognised by the General Assembly. [New Art. 7.8]
2. It shall be the aim of the church to have all its halls equipped with not fewer than three professors, such professors to be separate from any pastoral charge; but, meanwhile, the halls in Australia recognised by the General Assembly shall be the theological hall in Ormond College, Melbourne, and the theological hall in St. Andrew's College, Sydney. [New Art. 7.5]
3. Professors shall be elected to vacant chairs by the state assembly maintaining the said chairs.
4. The course of study in each hall shall extend over a period of three years, and shall include the subjects of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis, New Testament Greek and exegesis, apologetic, church history, systematic theology and pastoral theology and training, and such other subjects as may from time to time be prescribed. [New Art. 7.2, 7.7]
5. Candidates for admission to a theological hall shall produce evidence to the College Committee that they have obtained or qualified for a degree in some recognised university. [New Art. 7.2]
6. Notwithstanding the provisions of (viii) 5 students who have obtained the prerequisites for entrance to a Theological Hall may be admitted.
7. The prerequisites for entrance for a Theological Hall shall be such as are approved from time to time by the General Assembly.

1905
Min. 41:

1967 Min.
22(6)(b):

1928 Min.
60 (2):

1928 Min.
60 (2)
1962 Min.
122(5)(d):

1928 Min.
60(2)
1962 Min.
122(5)(d)

1962 Min.
122(5):

8. (Repealed)

1962 Min.
25, 1962
Min. 122
(5)(b):

9. A Committee on Theological Education, to be known as the College Committee, shall be appointed by the General Assembly, and shall have an executive meeting in one of the university seats. Of this Committee, the Professors and Lecturers shall be members ex-officio. It shall deal with all matters pertaining to the training of the students and the studies in the Halls. [New Art. 7.1]

1905
Min. 41:

10. Each State Assembly within whose bounds a Theological Hall is situated shall appoint annually a Theological Hall Committee, with authority over the general management and finances of the Hall, and to deal with all matters which concern the interests of the Hall that are entrusted to it by its own Assembly and by the General Assembly. These Committees shall report to the General Assembly through its Committee. [New Art. 7.4, 7.6]

11. In order to the settlement of all other matters pertaining to the Theological Halls, the Federal Assembly at its last meeting, or the General Assembly at its first meeting, shall appoint a Committee which shall include among its members all the recognised Theological Professors or Lecturers of the several Churches, and the Conveners of the now existing Boards of Examination, whose first duty shall be to inquire into the course of study, the provision for, and the methods of, instruction in use in the several Halls of the Churches; to draft, provisionally, a common course of study adapted as far as possible to the means and methods in use in the several halls; and to consider what modifications of these may be necessary in order to secure the attainment of a common standard;

and to report on all these matters to the General Assembly, the present mode of examination remaining in status quo until such arrangements have been completed and approved by the General Assembly.

1905 Min:
41: 1967.
Min. 22
(6)(a)

IX Ministers from other denominations shall be admitted to the United Church only by the General Assembly; those from other Presbyterian Churches either by the General Assembly, or by the State Assembly, or by such Committees as have the power delegated to them, and in accordance with rules framed so as to secure uniformity of method of admission. Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Australia who have undertaken missionary service under the Board of Missions and have put themselves under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church within which they are working and licentiates of the Presbyterian Church of Australia who have undertaken missionary service under the Board of Missions and have placed themselves under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the church within which they are to work and received ordination at their hands, shall be received immediately by such committee as has power delegated to it, upon the presentation of a certificate of status from the Church in which they have been serving and a certificate of good conduct from the Board of Missions. [New Art. 8]

- 1909
Min. 51
- X Reports of a full and definite kind shall be forwarded to the General Assembly from each State Assembly on all matters pertaining to the work and welfare of the Church, including Home Mission, Sabbath Schools, and the State of Religion and Morals; and it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to consider these, and to issue recommendations, when that is deemed advisable, with regard to them; the General Assembly shall further be free, in conjunction with the State Assembly, to originate new Home Mission Schemes, and to take such steps as may be deemed advisable to raise money and otherwise assist the Home Mission operations of the Church. [New Art. 9]
- 1905
Min. 41:
- XI The state general assemblies shall retain their present names, and their autonomy shall not be further interfered with than is needful to give effect to the basis of union and the articles of agreement. [New Art. 10]
- 1905
Min. 41:
- XII 1. A fund shall be formed for the purposes of defraying the working expenses of the General Assembly, and such part of the travelling expenses of the members as the General Assembly may from time to time determine, and this fund shall be contributed to by the State Assembly in such proportions as the General Assembly may from time to time determine. [New Art. 11.2]
- 1920
Min. 65:
2. It shall be lawful for the General Assembly, if it thinks fit, to make or secure financial provision for the benefit of Ministers of the Church incapacitated by age or infirmity, and of the widows and orphans of deceased Ministers of the Church, and without limiting the generality of the preceding power to form a fund or funds for the said purposes or any of them, and also to require Ministers of the Church to contribute towards any such provision or fund, and to require congregations or churches to contribute thereto in respect of Ministers of such congregations or in the employment of such churches connected therewith, and to determine the amount of contributions, and also to legislate or pass regulations in respect of any of the matters hereby authorised:
- Provided that no Minister within the jurisdiction of a State Assembly connected with or liable to join a Beneficiary or Provident Fund thereof shall be required to contribute to any financial provision or fund of the General Assembly hereunder without the consent of the State Assembly. [New Art. 11.5]
- 1905
Min. 41:
- XIII The articles of agreement may be altered or added to from time to time, but not without the consent of the majority of the presbyteries of the whole Church and a majority of the state assemblies. [New Art. 15.1]
- 1957
Min. 168:
- XIV The General Assembly at each ordinary meeting shall appoint a Committee for the management and administration of the Missions to the Jews whose duties and authority shall be from time to time prescribed by rules, regulations or resolutions of the Assembly and until otherwise prescribed shall subject to review or instructions by the General Assembly be such as the Jewish Mission Committee of the Assembly at present performs and exercises. [Article XIV

omitted from New Articles]

ACT Repealed 1979 Min 17(1):	XV	
1957 Min. 168:	XVI	The ecclesiastical authority as regards the nomination discharge and control of Chaplains in the Naval, Military and Air Services of the Commonwealth of Australia at home or abroad is vested in the General Assembly which at each ordinary meeting of the Assembly shall appoint a Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee with such constitution powers and duties as the General Assembly may from time to time, by rule, regulation or resolution prescribe. The General Assembly may also delegate such portions of its authority in the matter as it shall deem fit to the Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee of the Presbyterian Churches in the several States of the Commonwealth (or any of them) and co-operate with those Committees and the Assemblies of Presbyterian Churches in the respective States in all matters conducive to the satisfactory conduct and control of the work of the chaplains. [New Art. 6]
1957 Min. 168:	XVII	The General Assembly shall have authority to promote and assist the social and religious welfare of immigrants to Australia and the territories thereof and for these purposes to co-operate with the Presbyterian Churches of the several Australian states and Great Britain and Ireland, the Reformed Churches of Europe, and such other Churches in those or other countries as the General Assembly's Committee having authority in the matter of immigration may, subject to review or instruction by the General Assembly from time to time approve. [Article XVII omitted from New Articles.]
1957 Min. 168:	XVIII	The General Assembly at each ordinary meeting shall appoint a Committee to examine and report upon the methods adopted by the Presbyterian Churches throughout the Commonwealth for insurance against fire and other risks to buildings owned or controlled by those Churches indemnity against such risks and the reinstatement of buildings destroyed or damaged by fire or other causes and to co-operate with the authorities of such churches or any of them for union of interests joint or federal control or mutual association in respect of any of the matters aforesaid. [New Art. 12.1]
1967 Min. 22(6)(c)(ii):	XVIII (a)	The General Assembly at each ordinary meeting shall appoint a Committee on a National Church Journal to manage the publication of a National Presbyterian Journal according to regulations to be enacted and amended from time to time by the General Assembly. [New Art. 2.1(j)]
1991 Min. 84:	XIX	Only men shall be eligible for admission to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in the Presbyterian Church of Australia and all rules and regulations of the Assembly and services of Ordination shall be construed that reference therein to ministers of the Word and Sacraments shall refer only to men. [New Art. 7.9]

Footnotes:

1. The General Assembly declared in 1926 that presbyteries may not appoint as representatives elders beyond their bounds (B.B. 1926 Min. 115(3)).
2. See Article XIX.
3. This article editorially was given No. X and Christian Education IX but the number

was never lawfully changed from IX in original article (Article on Christian Education repealed 1979 Min. 17(1)(b)). Now merely a matter of Regulation 1982 Min. 14(1)).

4. The rights of those women ordained to the ministry, or accepted as a candidate for the ministry, prior to the 1991 General Assembly, are not affected (B.B. 1988 Min. 136; B.B. 1991 Mins. 63, 170).

(viii) From seven members of the Assembly concerning an amendment to Standing Orders by the inclusion of a provision for counter motions.

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS:

- A. Standing Order 26 states that 'a direct negative to a motion shall not be a competent amendment'.
- B. Not infrequently alternative solutions arise amongst commissioners in respect of specific questions or issues.
- C. These solutions sometimes are contradictory to one another, in whole or in part.
- D. There is presently no satisfactory method of allocating priority to one of several notices of motion dealing with the same question, whether one or more is contradictory to another.
- E. Since 1993 the New South Wales Assembly has had within its standing orders the means whereby contradictory motions can be conveniently handled simultaneously to the satisfaction of both individual commissioners and the Assembly.
- F. Presbyteries within New South Wales have also found the potential to debate contradictory motions simultaneously an effective aid to the efficient conduct of their business.

Now therefore the undersigned commissioners to the General Assembly of Australia humbly overture the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and to amend the standing orders of the Assembly by the addition of the following:

7. New standing orders 24A and 24B as follows:

Character of Motions:

24A Motions shall be considered as belonging to one of the following categories, and shall be dealt with as prescribed, namely:

- (a) the original motion,
- (b) counter-motions - being motions contradictory or negative of the original motion or of a substantial part of the original motion, and
- (c) amendments - being motions not substantially contradictory of the original motion or counter-motion, but for:
 - (i) leaving out certain words,
 - (ii) leaving out certain words in order to insert or add other words,
or
 - (iii) inserting or adding certain words.

The Moderator shall be the judge of the character to which any motion shall be considered to belong, and shall rule accordingly.

Procedure for Voting on Motions:

24B After all amendments, if any, have been disposed of, the Moderator shall take a vote between all motions in Categories (a) and (b) of Standing Order 24A, and in doing so shall adopt the following procedure:

- (a) A vote shall be taken between all the motions in the order as determined by the Moderator, beginning at the first.
- (b) Each Commissioner may vote for one motion only.
- (c) If on the vote being taken, one motion has obtained a clear majority of votes, all the other motions shall fall.
- (d) If no motion has obtained a clear majority, the motion having the smallest number of votes shall be disregarded and a vote taken between the remaining motions.
- (e) The same procedure shall continue until one motion receives a clear

majority on a vote.

- (f) The motion which has received a clear majority shall then be put by the Moderator to the Assembly, and shall be voted on "For" or "Against". If a majority vote for it, the motion shall become the judgement of the Assembly. If a majority vote against it the motion shall fall, and further procedure in the matter shall be as the Assembly may determine.

(2) Amend Standing Order 43 by the addition of the following words after "original motion" in (c) - "except in any debate involving counter motions".

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

Rev. Dr. Paul G. Logan, Rev. B.M. Meller, W.G. Morrow, K.D. Murray, Mr. S.H. Fraser, P.J. Graham, K.P. Mar.

The Rev. B.M. Meller and Mr. S.H. Fraser were appointed to state the Overture.

(ix) From the Presbytery of Sydney concerning qualifications of a Procurator.

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS:

- A. The General Assembly of Australia regulations regarding "Law Officers" specify that the Procurator shall be a barrister-at-law and "a communicant or adherent of the Presbyterian Church of Australia"; and
- B. While there are a reasonable number of solicitors in membership of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, there seem to be few barristers; and
- C. No one knows when a Procurator might be elevated to the Bench, or unable to act for some other reason, and therefore have to resign as Procurator; and
- D. There does not seem to be any compelling reason why a practicing Christian who is a member of another denomination could not satisfactorily fulfill the tasks given to the Procurator of the General Assembly of Australia.

Now therefore the Presbytery of Sydney humbly overtures the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and to add the following words to regulation 1(a) of Chapter 4 of the Code of the General Assembly of Australia (Law Officers - Regulations): or of another Christian Church.

so that clause 1(a) would then read:

The Procurator shall be a barrister-at-law of one of the States of the Commonwealth or of the High Court of Australia, and a communicant or adherent of the Presbyterian Church of Australia or of another Christian Church.

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. C. Balzer and P. Cooper were appointed to state the Overture.

(x) From the Code Committee concerning the reinstatement of ministers who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia but not become ministers of another denomination.

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS:

- A. The Reception of Ministers Committee expressed the view to the Code Committee that there was uncertainty about procedures for the reinstatement to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of ministers who have resigned from the ministry and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination.
- B. Such former ministers do not come within the area of the responsibility of the Reception of Ministers Committee as they are not "ministers from other churches" for the purposes of Article IV.
- C. Ministers are accepted as candidates for the ministry, licensed and ordained to the

ministry by a presbytery, demit their charges and resign from the ministry to a presbytery.

- D. It seems consistent with Presbyterian polity for presbyteries to have the responsibility for the reinstatement of ministers who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination.

Now therefore the Code Committee humbly overtures the General Assembly of Australia to take these premises into consideration and to:

1. Declare that the reinstatement to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of ministers who have resigned from the ministry and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination is a matter for presbyteries.
2. Request State assemblies to enact, where required, laws to regulate the reinstatement to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of ministers who have resigned from the ministry and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination.
3. Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan and B.M. Meller were appointed to state the Overture.

(xi) From ten members of the Assembly concerning elders celebrating the Sacraments.

To the Venerable General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia:

WHEREAS:

- A. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27, Section 4 reads:
"There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ the Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully ordained".
- B. The General Assembly of Australia has amended the Westminster Confession of Faith by the addition of the words:
"Saving where the General Assembly has made special provision to the contrary that the people of God may not be left without these sealing ordinances".
- C. The General Assembly of Australia has made provision that certain persons employed by various Assembly committees may be authorised to celebrate the sacraments, such persons often being entitled "home missionaries".
- D. It is now the case that many home mission stations can no longer afford to pay a home missionary and are being ministered to by elders, particularly in rural areas.
- E. Many new areas in need of a minister can afford to employ neither an ordained minister nor a home missionary, but elders retired from their previous occupations are available to act as missionaries in such areas and do not need to be paid the equivalent of a full stipend.
- F. These elders preach and perform pastoral duties as would an ordained minister or a home missionary, but they are not now permitted to celebrate the sacraments.
- G. From time to time, situations arise where an ordained minister is unable to attend a scheduled service of the Lord's Supper or Baptism.
- H. The number of ordained minister is not keeping pace with the increase in population, and as a result there is difficulty in obtaining ordained ministers to celebrate the sacraments on a regular basis in districts where elders are ministering, and it is not fitting that people should be deprived of the sacraments.
- I. It is desirable that the regular preacher in a congregation should also celebrate the sacraments in that congregation.

Now therefore the undersigned humbly overture the General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and enlarge the declaration embodied in 5.2 of its "Constitution, Procedure and Practice" by adding the following words:

Elders set apart by a presbytery to perform special pastoral work in either a home mission station, vacant charge, or an area requiring missionary activity to commence and

develop a church, may be authorised by the ordained minister or interim moderator of the bounds to celebrate the sacraments.

The minister or interim moderator of the bounds shall be responsible to Presbytery for the manner in which these sacraments are celebrated and all such cases are to be duly reported to the Presbytery.

Presbyteries are counselled to exercise care so that only elders proven by service to be suitable to take special responsibilities are appointed and given the right to celebrate the sacraments.

In administering the sacraments the elders shall consult and use the forms in "The Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia" or "The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland."

The elders shall not celebrate the sacraments except in their sphere of work and on occasions fixed by the Kirk Session.

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The P.E. Lush and D.A. Burke were appointed to state the overture.

P.E. Lush, P. Campbell, R.S. Keith, P.J. Graham, J. Greig, D.A. Burke, P.F. Cooper, C.D. Balzer, S.A. Andrews, I.R. Schoonwater.

REPORTS

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

"Partnership in Mission"

Policy Handbook

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ENCLOSURES (contained in the envelope at the back of the booklet)

Westminster Confession of Faith
Declaratory Statement

1. THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION COMMITTEE

The Australian Presbyterian World Mission is appointed by the Presbyterian Church of Australia for the purpose of facilitating obedience to the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to "go and make disciples of all nations". In some situations this results in the establishing of Presbyterian churches, and in others making contributions within teams whose aim it is to draw people to the truth as it is found in Christ alone, and nurture them within the body of Christ at a local level. In order to achieve this purpose, partnerships are formed with approved Mission Societies and with Presbyterian and Reformed Churches whose Biblical, theological, and ecclesiastical understandings are in harmony with those of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The APWM takes responsibility in encouraging the home side churches to be obedient to their Lord in respect to mission, calling out, giving direction for training, and providing administrative systems and support for missionaries. In all of this there is a close working relationship with local congregations, presbyteries, State APWM committees, Societies and overseas churches. (For detailed information on the responsibilities and regulations of the APWM see DOCUMENTS AND APPENDICES 16. and 17.)

2. A HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

From early in their history, the Presbyterian Churches of the Australasian colonies were involved in cross-cultural mission; in Australia, among the Aborigines, Chinese and Kanakas; and overseas in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), Korea and South India.

After the formation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1901, the Australian Presbyterian Board of Mission (APBM) undertook the oversight of this work. This later became the Board of Ecumenical Mission and Relationships (BOEMAR).

In 1977, most missionaries serving under the then BOEMAR transferred their membership to the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) and continued to serve in mission through that church. There remained no continuing Presbyterian missionaries in Korea or India and only three families with the Presbyterian Church of New Hebrides (now the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu), namely: Pastor Bill and Mrs. Sue Camden, Pastor Walter and Mrs. Rosemary Zurrer, and Mr. Leon and Mrs. Sue Thorpe. The former extensive Presbyterian work among Aborigines also became part of the UCA mission.

It was realised however, that there were many Presbyterians serving in various parts of the world with Mission Societies. Prior to 1977 these missionaries had received little help or recognition from the Presbyterian Church.

The 1977 General Assembly set up a special Committee on World Mission to supervise the few remaining BOEMAR workers and to make contact with the many Australian Presbyterians working with inter-denominational Mission Societies.

With much hard work and some helpful guidance and information from the Presbyterian Church in America (PC in A) a system of developing partnership with Mission Societies, and dual-membership for the missionaries was established. This resulted in a situation whereby Presbyterians serving in these Societies gained assurance of the prayerful concern, encouragement, and financial support from their own Church. This new initiative gave substance to the church's obedience in mission, and opened the way for rapid development in advancing the cause of Christ to make disciples in all the world.

Over the years, there has continued to be a steady flow of our people in the direction of cross-cultural mission, the majority serving through the channels of the Mission Societies; and others directly through the Church's APWM Committee. The latter have served in Australia, Vanuatu, South Africa (Venda), and in Japan.

In 1991 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, gave the APWM authority to appoint a National World Mission Coordinator (now National Director) to work with the APWM Committees in promoting the cause of world mission within the denomination. In 1993 the Federal APWM Committee appointed a National Coordinator (whose title was changed in 1997 to National Director) and whose job description is set out under Section 14.

3. THE ENVIRONMENT FROM WHICH MISSIONARY CANDIDATES ARISE

3.1 The Church and the Candidate

The local Church should be actively engaged in encouraging involvement in the great commission, through preaching and teaching the duty of all Christians to be "witnesses for Christ" in the normal course of Christian life.

The local church should also search out the gifts of its membership and encourage the use of these gifts in every part of the Church's mission at the local, national and international levels. The Acts of the Apostles clarifies the scriptural role of the Church as the sending authority, and in that respect, the prayer and financial base for mission. It is significant that in the sending of missionaries in the Acts of the Apostles, the emphasis was upon the initiative of the church leadership being directed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:22, 25-26; 13:1-4; 15:39-40; 16:2).

It was a wonderful day when, on hearing the news of the growth of the Church at the hand of the ordinary Christians, the Church leaders identified the appropriate giftedness of Barnabas, and sent him off from the local congregation to serve elsewhere. Equally wonderful was the fact that "when he saw the evidence of the grace of God he was glad and encouraged them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts," and after a year or two, by the sovereign movement of the Spirit of God, he was moved on again to introduce Christ to nations overseas.

Local church leaders will ideally seek out and foster this kind of movement under God.

The APWM Committees will continue to bring possibilities for service before the church. When a Session or Presbytery encourages an individual to respond to opportunities for missionary service, the church accepts the responsibility to provide for that person in prayer, giving, encouragement and commissioning. The missionary is then seen to be a normal extension of the Church's ministry. The church should receive regular reports from the missionary and take an active interest in their work, encouraging regular communication with the missionary.

Missionaries working overseas normally come back to their sending country for Home Ministry Assignment. While recognising the special responsibilities and administrative arrangements of Partner Societies, the missionary's main responsibility is to the Church or Presbytery from which he/she was sent. Through cooperation with APWM opportunity will be provided for the missionary to share with a significant part of the denomination, thus helping to enlarge the missionary vision of the whole Church (see Acts 14:26-28). However, the extent of involvement will depend on the well being of the missionary (and family).

State APWM Committees, the National Director, and missionaries on Home Ministry Assignment should constantly stir enthusiasm for world mission through prayer, regular visitation, mission education and publications.

3.2 The Candidate

The seeds of mission thinking are sown in the general course of faithful gospel ministry. The potential "candidate" is being prepared through the challenge to be obedient to the great commission, accumulation of knowledge of the world, missionary speakers, reading, prayer, the encouragement of other Christians, and the ongoing direction of the Spirit of God.

As the possibility of serving as a missionary develops, an approach is made initially to the local Church leadership, and then to APWM or the Partner Society representative. Ultimately this progresses to a formal application in which several parties are involved, namely: the applicant, the local Church leadership, and representatives of the Partner Society and/or APWM.

4. MISSIONARIES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

For practical purposes there are three designations of Presbyterian missionaries who work under the banner of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission. All these missionaries are commissioned by the Church and their support (prayer, finance and encouragement) is primarily the responsibility of the Church:

4.1 **Partner Church missionaries**, ie. missionaries of the Presbyterian Church who are commissioned to undertake missionary service and who are deployed directly by APWM.

In terms of Article VII(b)(c)(d) it is important wherever possible to establish relationships between the Presbyterian Church of Australia and approved Presbyterian and other overseas churches with whom mission work can proceed by mutual agreement. Thus Partner Church missionaries will often serve Partner Churches and will be under their direction in missionary duties (see Documents and Appendices 18.2). However, Partner Church missionaries may serve under the direction of APWM in situations where cooperation with a Partner Church is not available or is inappropriate.

4.2 **Partner Society missionaries**, ie. missionaries of the Presbyterian Church who are assigned to membership of, and service with, one of the Partner Societies. These missionaries are approved by both APWM and the Partner Society and in their regular ministry are under the authority of their Partner Society (see Documents and Appendices 19). Partner Society missionaries may be appointed to a variety of ministries, including support roles, all of which have a place in planting and building up the church.

4.3 **Associate missionaries**. These missionaries minister in local or overseas situations in which no Partner Society or Partner Church is necessarily involved. While not directly deployed by APWM, they are commended by APWM to the people of the Presbyterian Church for prayer, encouragement and, where necessary, voluntary financial support.

In some cases members of the missionary team will be permitted or encouraged to participate in "tent-maker" ministry, but only in consultation with the APWM or the Partner Society.

5. **APPLICATION FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE**

5.1 **Application to Serve as a Partner Church missionary**

Formal application should proceed in the following manner:

5.1.1 the applicant, recognising local Church leadership, should always in the first instance approach their local minister and elders to seek confirmation of their sense of the Holy Spirit's leading, and counsel regarding the possibility of cross-cultural ministry;

5.1.2 the applicant, after meeting with the minister and elders (Session), shall request a letter of reference and recommendation, to be submitted to the State APWM Committee;

5.1.3 the applicant shall then request application papers and other documentation and information from the APWM Committee of the State in which he/she resides, and once appropriate papers are completed, return them to the State APWM Committee, which may recommend further training;

5.1.4 the applicant will then be interviewed by the State APWM Committee, and will await further direction;

5.1.5 upon recommendation from the State APWM Committee, all information on the applicant will be remitted to the Federal APWM Committee, where, depending on reasonable accessibility, an interview will be conducted. The Federal APWM Executive may request the applicant to undergo a personality assessment by a suitably qualified Christian tester with cross cultural experience, subject to there being no objection from the applicant or from the State APWM Committee. At this point the applicant becomes a candidate. Further training may be recommended.

5.1.6 final acceptance is the responsibility of the Federal Committee;

5.1.7 upon final acceptance, the Federal APWM Executive Committee shall be responsible for salary package, communication with the Partner Church, and oversight of the missionary.

(see also under Financial Considerations, Section 10)

5.2 **Application to Serve as a Partner Society missionary**

Formal application should proceed in the following manner:

5.2.1 the applicant, recognising local Church leadership, shall normally in the first instance approach the local minister and elders to seek confirmation of their sense of the Holy Spirit's leading, and counsel regarding the possibility of cross-cultural ministry;

5.2.2 the applicant, after meeting with the minister and elders (Session), shall request a letter of reference and recommendation to be submitted to the Partner Society

and/or the State APWM Committee;

5.2.3 the applicant shall then request application papers from the Partner Society, and once completed, and with the concurrence of the Partner Society, shall return them to the Partner Society with copies to the State APWM Committee;

5.2.4 in the event of the Partner Society not being able to make completed application papers available, the State APWM Committee may request that APWM application papers be completed and medical assessment and references be provided;

5.2.5 the local Session in consultation with the State APWM Committee will initiate contact with the Partner Society in order to build strong partnership between the applicant, the Partner Society and the Church. Further training may be required prior to acceptance by the Partner Society;

5.2.6 following acceptance by the Partner Society, the State APWM Committee will consider the application, and make a recommendation to the Federal APWM Committee regarding acceptance as a Partner Society missionary to work with the Partner Society;

5.2.7 while the State APWM Committee will cooperate with the Partner Society in building a strong support base, including that of finance, the Partner Society missionary will be bound by the financial policies of the Partner Society;

5.2.8 no Partner Society missionary will be accepted as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, until final acceptance is received in writing from the Partner Society.

5.3 Application to Serve as an Associate Missionary

Formal application should proceed in the following manner:

5.3.1 the applicant, recognising local Church leadership, shall always in the first instance approach the local minister and elders to seek confirmation of their sense of the Holy Spirit's leading, and counsel regarding the possibility of cross-cultural ministry;

5.3.2 the applicant, after meeting with the minister and elders (Session) shall request a letter of reference and recommendation to be submitted to the State APWM Committee;

5.3.3 the applicant shall then request application papers and other documentation and information from the State APWM Committee, and once the appropriate papers are completed, return them, in order to proceed with the application;

5.3.4 the State APWM Committee may cooperate with the missionary applicant in respect to conferring with any relevant body in relation to their ministry involvement, and advise the applicant;

5.3.5 the State APWM Committee may discuss issues of salary package with the applicant and in some cases, with the organisation (if any) with which the applicant would be working. While not taking responsibility in the underwriting of the salary, the State APWM Committee will publicise any financial needs, and support the applicant in building the appropriate support base;

5.3.6 following consideration of the application the State APWM Committee will make a recommendation to the Federal APWM Committee in regard to acceptance of the missionary;

5.3.7 final acceptance is the responsibility of the Federal APWM Committee.

5.4 Missionary Candidates

These are potential members who have been accepted by the Partner Society and/or APWM, who request or who are required to complete training before engaging in their planned ministry, or who are awaiting deployment. Commissioning and financial support from APWM would normally take place after the satisfactory completion of such training and/or a departure date is finalised.

6. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARTNER CHURCHES AND PARTNER SOCIETIES

APWM will actively seek to establish relations with Presbyterian and Reformed Churches and other Fellowships and Societies worldwide, with a view to cooperative activity in a variety of ministries.

7. FORMING PARTNERSHIP WITH PARTNER SOCIETIES

When a member of the Presbyterian Church wishes to serve with one of the Mission Societies, the Federal APWM Committee will consider entering into partnership with that Society, with the following criteria in mind:

- 7.1 that it is an evangelical Society of recognised repute;
- 7.2 that examination of the principles and practices of the Society reveals no mandatory requirement for its members contrary to Biblical doctrine and practice as understood by the Presbyterian Church of Australia and expressed in its Basis of Union (1901);
- 7.3 that the Society must allow Presbyterian missionary members to exercise the distinctives of Presbyterian/Reformed theology as understood in the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church of Australia;
- 7.4 if a prospective Partner Society missionary wishes to work with a Society which has not yet entered into partnership, the State APWM Committee will present (as early as possible) a proposal to the Federal APWM Committee, for acceptance as a Partner Society;
- 7.5 the Federal APWM Committee ultimately will be responsible for entering into partnership arrangements with the Societies which meet the criteria as stated by the APWM. These Societies are then referred to as Partner Societies.

8. DUAL MEMBERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

8.1 As the Presbyterian Church is the sending body and the Partner Church or Partner Society is the receiving body, all APWM missionaries have dual membership. Therefore they remain members of the Presbyterian Church, ministers under jurisdiction of their Presbytery, and others under the jurisdiction of the local Session. However, where appropriate all missionaries should extend their membership to the local church where they are working, while retaining their home membership.

8.2 As there is a formal signed agreement regarding dual membership between APWM and the Partner Society, there is no need for individual signed agreements (see Documents and Appendices 19).

8.3 It is important that all missionaries be made aware of the responsibility of their dual membership of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Partner Church or the Partner Society. In particular, this involves an understanding of the relevant Cooperative Agreement (see Documents and Appendices 18 and 19).

8.4 Because of this partnership in mission it is desirable for missionaries to state in Information Brochures and other communications that they are missionaries of both the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Partner Society or Church.

9. LIAISON BETWEEN APWM AND PARTNER SOCIETIES

The APWM Committees wish to participate from the outset in the processing for candidature of Presbyterian applicants to Partner Societies.

9.1 Therefore the APWM requests:

9.1.1 that the Partner Society does not proceed in assessing the applicant until a recommendation has been received from the Session of the church of which the applicant is a member;

9.1.2 that at an appropriate time in the process of evaluation and acceptance, and where this is legally possible, the Partner Society agrees to send copies of the application to the State APWM Committee, and the medical papers only to the medical officer of the State APWM Committee. These documents would be treated confidentially.

9.1.3 that the Partner Society consults with the Session of the local church in respect to potential movements relating to the applicant/candidate;

9.1.4 that there be good cooperation between the local church and the Partner Society in respect to building a support base for the candidate;

9.1.5 that the candidate be accepted for service both by the Partner Society and the APWM before proceeding to commissioning;

9.1.6 that the Presbytery commission the missionary, with the cooperation of the local congregation, the Partner Society and APWM;

9.1.7 that the Partner Society provides the APWM with regular reports on the level of financial support received for the missionary.

9.2 In the course of application procedures, the State APWM Committee will:

9.2.1 receive application papers, and receive the report of the State Medical Officer;

9.2.2 interview the prospective missionary;

9.2.3 where necessary, examine the applicant further in the following areas: their medical condition, theological beliefs, ministry gifts, stability, and performance in service;

9.2.4 recommend the applicant for service with the Partner Society, and make this recommendation to the Federal APWM Committee;

9.2.5 bring recommendations for recognition of partnership to the Federal APWM Committee, if the Society with which the missionary is planning to serve has not been recognised as a Partner Society.

10. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 All parties in the missionary task must look to the LORD as the ultimate Provider.

10.2 APWM Committees (Federal and State) are the appropriate committees of the sending Church accepting responsibility for the care of all missionaries. Therefore the Federal Committee of APWM seeks to coordinate the loving and responsible financial support by the whole church.

10.3 Each State APWM Committee will attempt to build up a team of churches and members who will provide support not only in finance but also in prayer and encouragement. In this it will cooperate closely with the missionary, and where applicable with the Partner Church or Society.

10.4 While the whole church is reckoned to be the financial support base for the missionary team, the local congregation and presbytery will be viewed as the primary base for financial support.

10.5 The aim of the APWM is to achieve a substantial and balanced level of support, so as to ensure that our missionaries are not disadvantaged in comparison with those ministering in the home church.

10.6 The State APWM Committees will monitor the level of each missionary's individual support, and inform the church membership through the presbyteries, in order that where there is a short-fall in financial support, the situation may be redressed.

10.7 In the case of **Partner Church missionaries**, the support level in the sphere of service will be determined by the Federal APWM Committee, in consultation with the Partner Church and having in mind its ultimate responsibility to see that provision is adequate. The Federal APWM Committee has the responsibility to underwrite the support of each Partner Church missionary and will need all possible help from State APWM Committees in order to fulfil this responsibility. 100% of the financial requirements of Partner Church missionaries will be raised for each missionary leaving for the first time or returning to the sphere of service. When possible and necessary the Federal APWM Committee will consider contributing up to 25% of the established figure.

10.8 In the case of **Partner Society missionaries**, the level of financial support will be in terms of the Partner Society's regulations. The respective State APWM Committees will cooperate with the Societies in regard to building a support base by:

- encouraging the local church to strongly participate in prayer, care and financial support;
- assisting the local church to introduce the missionary to other churches within the presbytery and encouraging other churches to support the missionary, especially where such churches have no missionary of their own;
- attempting to build a pool of funds through State budgets, bequests and income generating ventures, thus securing a more generous support base for our missionaries;
- accounting for money sent for support of missionaries or missionary purposes;
- facilitating the transfer of financial support from the local church to the

Partner Society.

10.9 In the case of **Associate missionaries**, the level of financial support will be according to the receiving organisation's commitment in consultation with the missionary. The respective State APWM Committees will cooperate with the missionary in regard to building a support base in a way similar to that of the Partner Society missionary, if the salary received is insufficient.

10.10 Missionaries should not make personal appeals in Australia for **project funding** without the authority of the Church or the Society with which they are working, and APWM.

11. TRAINING AND ORIENTATION OF MISSIONARIES

11.1 APWM has established standards required of missionary candidates. Through the use of application papers and interviews the APWM will explore all aspects of the applicant's conversion experience, sense of call, soundness in the faith and understanding of Christian doctrine, experience in witness and ministry, sensitivity to and appreciation of other people, initiative and ability in professional or trade qualifications, health in all its aspects and personal discipline.

11.2 In general, missionary applicants are expected to have done Bible College or theological training at a College acceptable to the APWM. The NSW Presbyterian Theological Centre and the Victorian Presbyterian Theological College have special missionary training programmes. Most of the Bible Colleges of Australia have significant focus on the training of candidates for missionary service. (Further information can be provided in respect to venues for missionary training).

11.3 The Federal APWM Committee will give careful direction to **Partner Church missionaries** in regard to:

- a programme of orientation, cultural adaptation and introduction to missionary life
- the particular culture and history of the receiving country and church through a course of reading and attendance at private tuition or courses (where possible).
- further training and attendance at a Partner Church's Candidates' Course (if available and considered desirable)

11.4 The APWM assumes that **Partner Society missionaries** will fulfil the conditions for service in respect to courses of training, as set by the Partner Society under which the missionary serves.

11.5 The APWM assumes that **Associate missionaries** will be appropriately trained for their sphere of service, and will attempt to advise in the following areas:

- further courses of training
- cultural adaptation and missionary life
- the particular culture and history of the receiving country

11.6 APWM Federal and State Committees assume responsibility (in consultation and cooperation with the Partner Society and/or local church) for the pastoral care and debriefing of all missionaries. State Committees will make available appropriate professional Christian counselling and/or debriefing to missionaries on request, or if considered advisable by the Committee.

11.7 No missionary shall serve the Church in Australia or overseas without all appropriate vaccinations.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MISSIONARIES ON ASSIGNMENT

Some of the responsibilities of the missionary team include:

12.1 working diligently in the ministry they have received from the Lord (Colossians 4:17), consistent with the aims of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and under the direction and control of the appropriate body with whom they are working;

12.2 maintaining good communication with APWM so that matters of praise or special difficulty can be brought to notice for prayer and encouragement within the wider fellowship of the Church;

12.3 forwarding information and prayer letters three times per year to supporters and the relevant Presbytery, State and Federal APWM Committees;

12.4 writing to all donors to acknowledge support gifts;

12.5 Partner Church missionaries sending a report to the Federal and State APWM Committees at least once per year.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MISSIONARIES ON HOME MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Some of the responsibilities of the missionary team on Home Ministry Assignment include:

13.1 Issues of Re-entry

13.1.1 APWM requires that at the beginning of Home Ministry Assignment for overseas and distance missionaries, the missionary will take adequate time for rest and readjustment to the culture of origin

13.1.2 State APWM Committee may request that the missionaries attend conferences such as "Re-entry Stress", "Missionary Enrichment Retreat", "Home Assignment Ministry", and conventions like those held at Belgrave Heights, Mt. Tamborine, Katoomba and the CMS Summer Schools.

13.1.3 at both the beginning of Home Ministry Assignment, and at the termination of the service with the APWM, **Partner Church missionaries** will undertake a debriefing process conducted by the Federal APWM Committee, and it is expected that the **Partner Society missionaries** will participate with the Partner Society in a similar process. **Associate missionaries** should confer with State APWM Committees in this regard.

13.1.4 as early as possible after re-entry all missionaries should undergo a comprehensive medical examination. The Federal APWM Committee will be responsible for financing this for **Partner Church** and **Associate missionaries**, while for **Partner Society missionaries** it is expected that the Partner Society will act in this regard according to their own regulations.

13.2 Issues of Deputation

13.2.1 during Home Ministry Assignment **Partner Church missionaries** will undertake a programme of deputation arranged by the State APWM Committee/s in order to foster prayerful interest and encouragement among the churches in the work God has given them to do. The missionary is encouraged to participate actively in these arrangements, and if possible to take the initiative with the State Committee several months prior to Home Ministry Assignment

13.2.2 during Home Ministry Assignment **Partner Society missionaries** will have responsibilities to the Partner Society, but it is expected that there will be close cooperation between the missionary, the Partner Society and the State APWM Committee in respect to deputation ministry

13.2.3 during Home Ministry Assignment **Associate missionaries** will undertake a programme of deputation arranged by the State APWM Committee in order to foster prayerful interest and encouragement among the churches in the work God has given them to do. The missionary is encouraged to take the initiative in these arrangements with the State APWM Committee.

14. THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

The Director is an appointee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and is accountable to the Assembly through the Federal APWM Committee.

14.1 The duties of the National Director are:

14.1.1 pastoral care of missionaries returning on Home Ministry Assignment or preparing to go (to be shared on a common-sense basis with the local church, the APWM Convener and State Committee)

14.1.2 liaison between the Federal APWM Committee and the State APWM Committees

14.1.3 liaison with Partner Churches and Partner Societies, and development of relationships in terms of the APWM Policy Document, "Partnership in Mission"

14.1.4 to conduct education programmes in parishes and/or presbyteries

Australia-wide

- 14.1.5 to arrange training courses for missionaries through our own Church and/or in association with existing courses of Partner Societies
- 14.1.6 personal study, application and assessment of trends in mission, and teaching in missiology
- 14.1.7 broad based missionary publicity
- 14.1.8 correspondence
- 14.1.9 meetings with other PCA Committees
- 14.1.10 visitation of missionaries in their sphere of service.

15. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH MISSION COMMITTEE

APWM encourages local churches to form their own Mission Committee to raise awareness, and involvement of the local congregation in supporting missionary work inside and outside Australia, and suggests the following guidelines for such a committee:

- 15.1 Membership
 - members of the committee should demonstrate a heart for the salvation of the lost, and a commitment to growth in knowledge of, and prayer for, the mission task of the church
 - elders should figure prominently on this Committee
 - the committee should cooperate with the Session in seeking out members of the church who show giftedness for cross cultural mission
- 15.2 Working with the congregation, the committee will:
 - disseminate information on the world in which Christ's mission takes place, world situations in which our Church is involved, and missionaries in whom the congregation is particularly interested
 - foster prayer in the congregation for missionaries and mission work
- 15.3 Working with potential missionaries alongside the Session, the committee will:
 - display enthusiasm for the missionary cause, and encourage the applicant in respect to training, Christian growth and prayerfulness
 - support the candidate in preparation for departure, building the support base, and visiting other congregations with the candidate for the purpose of introduction and support
- 15.4 Working with the missionary on assignment, the committee will:
 - keep in touch in appropriate ways
 - encourage prayer and support
 - seek information from APWM on the level of the missionary's support, and inform the relevant supporting bodies and individuals
 - if possible have a member of the committee visit the missionary
- 15.5 Working with the missionary on Home Ministry Assignment the committee will:
 - prepare for the missionary's Home Ministry Assignment by keeping abreast with all plans and programmes for the missionary whilst on Home Ministry Assignment
 - meet at the point of disembarkation
 - advise and assist in regard to children's education
 - help in the provision of housing, vehicle, rest, spiritual refreshment and entertainment
 - be creative in reintroducing them back into their congregation and presbytery

DOCUMENTS AND APPENDICES

16. APWM ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT (Section VII)

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

The Code of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the Articles of Agreement states the following:

There shall be a Committee on Missions of the General Assembly entitled the Committee for Australian Presbyterian World Mission, formerly known as the Board of Missions and Ecumenical Relations. It shall be the responsibility of the Committee:

(a) To enunciate and carry through the Assembly's policy in regard to the missionary service and outreach of the Church to peoples of other cultures and other countries;

(b) To enter, on behalf of the Assembly, into formal relationships and agreements with other Churches and mission bodies;

(c) To establish and maintain partnership relationships with approved overseas Churches;

(d) To establish relationships with overseas Churches worldwide and, where useful and possible, to work through them on behalf of the Assembly;

(e) To negotiate on behalf of the Assembly with approved mission bodies and members of the Presbyterian Church working with them, to establish dual-membership agreements and to encourage support for our members so involved;

(f) To encourage at all levels of the Church's life, especially at the level of the congregation, an enlightened and wholehearted commitment to the missionary task of the Church;

(g) To encourage the spiritual and physical well-being of all Presbyterian missionaries;

(h) To seek external funding for development projects of the work of mission.

17. COMMITTEE REGULATIONS - AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

Section 3.1, Constitution, Procedure and Practice of the PC of A)

17.1 There shall be a Committee of the General Assembly known as the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee.

17.2 The Committee shall consist of:

- A Convener elected by the General Assembly
- The Convener of each of the APWM State Committees of Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia
- Two representatives appointed by the APWM State Committees of Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, one of whom shall be the State Convener
- The National Director
- Seven members elected by the General Assembly
- Ex-Officio appointments from the General Assembly.

17.3 The Executive shall consist of:

- The Convener
- The National Director
- One representative appointed by each of the State Committees of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales
- Committee Members elected by the General Assembly who are from the State in which the Convener resides
- Such other members appointed by the Executive so that there will be a total of seven members from the State in which the Convener resides.

17.4 The functions of the Committee are to implement the Articles of Agreement (Section VII, see 16 above) as approved by the General Assembly and otherwise any other relevant decisions of the General Assembly.

17.5 The Federal APWM Committee is responsible for:

- Final acceptance of missionary candidates after interview and recommendation by their State Committee;
- Formally entering into partnership with Mission Societies, and prospective Partner Churches;
- Formulation of mission policy;
- Control of mission work of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and ensuring that it is consistent with the Church's doctrine and practice;

- Developing mission initiatives to which the Lord is calling;
- Encouraging the spiritual and physical well-being of all Presbyterian missionaries in cooperation with State APWM Committees;
- Seeking external funding for development aspects of the work of mission.

17.6 APWM will request each State Assembly to form a Standing Committee under its own complementing Regulations.

17.7 APWM State Committees shall:

- Promote the work of APWM;
- Accept financial responsibility for supporting projects and personnel according to the policies of the Federal APWM Committee;
- Undertake all appropriate matters relating to the State's applicants for mission service, and making recommendations for acceptance to the Federal APWM Committee;
- Co-operate with the Presbytery concerned in the Service of Commissioning;
- Arrange Home Ministry Assignments for the State's missionaries in consultation with the Federal APWM Committee through the National Director, and the Partner Societies;
- In co-operation with the Federal APWM Committee, encourage the spiritual and physical well-being of all Presbyterian missionaries.

18. CONDITIONS AND AGREEMENTS RELATING TO PARTNER CHURCH MISSIONARIES

18.1 Preamble

These conditions and agreements concern missionary personnel who are members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who work in an agreed and clearly defined role in partnership with a Partner Church (See Section 8). The relationship may be terminated by any one of the parties but only after consultation with all others and with at least one month's notice in writing.

18.2 Concerning the Missionary

18.2.1 The missionary is appointed subject to the approval of both APWM and the Partner Church (or such body within it that has the authority to so approve), according to the standards and needs of each. Final appointment (and Terms of Appointment) will be by the Partner Church.

18.2.2 The missionary shall participate in such programmes of training and orientation as may be required by APWM and the Partner Church in consultation.

18.2.3 Jurisdiction over the missionary while travelling to and from the sphere of service shall be determined by APWM solely.

18.2.4 While in the field of service the missionary shall be under the jurisdiction and authority of the Partner Church and subject to its standards. In all cases where discipline is exercised, the Partner Church should advise APWM of its action. In serious cases, APWM should be consulted by the Partner Church if possible before definitive action is taken.

18.2.5 The missionary shall have liberty in the full and free presentation of the gospel as expressed in the Basis of Union (1901) of the Presbyterian Church, subject always to the standards and authority of the Church within which the missionary work takes place.

18.3 Concerning Home Ministry Assignment

18.3.1 The frequency and length of the missionary's Home Ministry Assignment is subject to the Terms of Appointment of the Partner Church. Information regarding this must be forwarded to the State APWM Committee as soon as possible after field (Partner Church) decisions are made.

18.3.2 On Home Ministry Assignment the missionary is under the jurisdiction of the State APWM Committee which will give consideration to assignment projects or additional study leave in close consultation with both the Partner Church and the missionary and shall be responsible for arranging accommodation.

18.3.3 On Home Ministry Assignment the missionary will undertake deputation among the Presbyterian Church of Australia constituency as a primary responsibility. This will be arranged and paid for by the State APWM Committee having

regard to the missionary's need for rest and to be ministered to in their local church.

18.3.4 All information relating to the missionary's Home Ministry Assignment shall be forwarded to the Federal APWM Committee by the State Committees.

18.4 Concerning Federal and State APWM Committees and Partner Church

18.4.1 The Federal and State APWM Committees are the primary sponsoring body for financial and prayer support for the missionary. Partner Church missionaries are required to have 100% of their support promised before being eligible to be sent out. The Partner Church shall keep the Federal and relevant State APWM Committees fully informed of all changes in financial matters relating to the missionary. The Partner Church is encouraged to participate in all aspects of the support of the missionary.

18.4.2 The State APWM Committee will supervise the obtaining of visas and other documentation necessary for the commencement of active missionary work, but may seek the advice and help of the Partner Church.

18.4.3 The missionary will work under the authority and direction of the Partner Church. The Partner Church will inform APWM of all changes in job allocation.

18.4.4 The Partner Church may exercise discipline over such missionaries as are working within it. It should in all such cases fully inform the Federal APWM Committee of the details of the matter, with the understanding that APWM will make a careful assessment of such decisions made by the Partner Church. APWM may enter into a process of consultation with the Partner Church with a view to a reassessment of the missionary's current status. Discipline within Australia can only be exercised through the Rules applicable within the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

18.4.5 The missionary's support quota shall be stated in the Terms of Appointment, in consultation with the Partner Church.

18.4.6 The Federal APWM Committee will make provision for superannuation benefits and health cover for its missionaries unless such missionaries are able to retain membership of superannuation or beneficiary funds within their own States. In the latter case APWM will pay the Church's share of any contributions.

19. CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN APWM AND PARTNER SOCIETIES

This agreement concerns missionary personnel who are members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who have been accepted as missionaries of an approved Partner Society. This agreement may be terminated by either party after due consultation with the other party and with one month's notice in writing.

19.1 Concerning the Missionary

19.1.1 The missionary is appointed subject to the approval of both APWM and the Partner Society in accordance with the standards of each. The missionary candidate will be assessed by APWM on the basis of the Partner Society's application forms, advice of their medical referee and personal interview by State APWM (see also 5.2.4 if these forms cannot be supplied by the Partner Society).

19.1.2 The missionary shall participate in the training and orientation programme as required by the Partner Society in consultation with the APWM.

19.1.3 While in the location of ministry and while in transit, the missionary shall be under the jurisdiction of the Partner Society.

19.1.4 While in the location of ministry, the missionary as an integral member of the ministry staff, shares equally in the privileges and responsibilities of such and is subject to the policies and direction of the Partner Society.

19.1.5 The missionary shall have liberty in the full and free presentation of the gospel as expressed in the Basis of Union (1901) of the Presbyterian Church, provided that the manner of its presentation in the field of service is deemed to be consistent with the field policies of the Partner Society.

19.2 Concerning Home Ministry Assignment

19.2.1 On Home Ministry Assignment the missionary is under the jurisdiction of the Partner Society, who in close consultation with the State APWM Committee will give consideration to recuperation and rest, deputation, assignments, projects or additional study leave.

19.2.2 Partner Societies are requested to allow appropriate time for the missionaries to be ministered to by their home church.

19.2.3 Where possible, a primary responsibility of the missionaries on Home Assignment will be to undertake deputation among the Presbyterian Church of Australia constituency. This should be arranged by the State APWM Committee.

19.2.4 Details and finances of deputation to a wider constituency and other requirements, will remain the responsibility of the Partner Society.

19.3 Concerning Federal and State APWM Committees and the Partner Society

19.3.1 Federal and State APWM Committees share responsibility with the Partner Society for prayer and financial support for the missionary. Adequate deputation will be arranged within congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Australia churches in preparation for field assignment, and during Home Ministry Assignment.

19.3.2 Similarly there will be co-operation with the Partner Society in deputation to a wider constituency. The aim of the Presbyterian Church of Australia is to increase our financial responsibility towards Partner Society missionaries.

19.3.3 The Partner Society will supervise the obtaining of visas and making other arrangements that are necessary for the commencement of their new ministry.

19.3.4 The Partner Society will be the directing body in relation to missionary activity in the field of service and will inform the State APWM Committee of important changes in job allocation. The State APWM Committee will keep the Federal APWM Committee informed.

19.3.5 Discipline in all matters is the prerogative of the Partner Society, but it shall be exercised only after consultation with State APWM Committees and the National Director. Where necessary such cases will also be dealt with in accordance with the rules of discipline of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

19.3.6 The missionary's support quota is established by the Partner Society in accordance with their regulations. Funds received by the APWM will be forwarded regularly to the Partner Society which will inform the State APWM Committee of the support received on behalf of the missionary.

19.3.7 Normally the Partner Society will make provision for superannuation benefits for its missionaries.

Signed by both parties

20. THE COMMISSIONING OF A MISSIONARY

We make this part of the Commissioning Service available for you as a guide only. Feel free to rework and reword it according to your own needs, experience and personal understandings of how to relate the Scriptures to the sending out of your missionary.

The Commissioning

In this act of commissioning/recommissioning our Church acknowledges that Jesus Christ our Lord calls all of His people to be witnesses to Him, both at home and in spheres of mission service overseas.

.....has/have heard the gracious call from Jesus to follow Him. He/she/they has/have prayed for labourers to be thrust out into the harvest. He/she/they have been convinced that He wants him/her/them to be labourers in those white "fields which are ready for harvest" as missionaries with

Dearfellow worker/s in Christ: We rejoice that you have heard the command of the Master to go and serve in His kingdom. In His name, we are about to commission/recommission you to the work to which you are designated, and to commend you to the gracious care of Jesus, whose commission you are to bear. But first, you will reaffirm your faith and integrity of godly purpose by answering the questions put to you:

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and do you confess anew that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord? (I/We do)
2. Do you believe in the Gospel of love and grace of God, which declares that only through Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, He freely offers forgiveness and eternal life, and calls us into the fellowship and service of His kingdom? (I/We do)
3. Are love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire to commend Him by your

word and life, so far as you know your own heart, your chief motives for accepting this opportunity to serve? (They are)

4. Do you promise, with the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk worthily of your calling, to discharge faithfully and cheerfully the duties of your office/respective offices, and to yield yourselves to the authority of those to whom the Church has committed the direction of your work? (I/We do)

5. Do you now confess and promise these things, through grace, as you would answer to your Lord? (I/We do)

Since no-one alone, is able to perform all these things, let us now pray God's strengthening for

Prayer for Missionary:

Declaration:

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, we declare youto be commissioned/recommissioned as a missionary/missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in full communion with thefor your ministry in We commend you to the grace of God in the fulfilling of your loving service for your Lord and Saviour. And following the pattern of the Scriptures of the New Testament and as a sign of our partnership with you, we commission/recommission you to God, with the laying on of hands.

The Blessing:

The Blessing "The Lord bless you and keep you".

In the event of a missionary being a candidate for ordination (or is already ordained as a minister of the church), use the QUESTIONS AT ORDINATION AND INDUCTION as set out in the respective State Codes.

THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION COMMITTEE

The Presbyterian Church of Australia has a clear doctrinal standard for its members, set out in the Basis of Union as follows:

Basis of Union

(i) The Supreme Standard of the united Church shall be the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments;

(ii) The Subordinate Standard of the united Church shall be the Westminster Confession of Faith read in the light of the following declaratory statement:-

1. That in regard to the doctrine of redemption as taught in the subordinate standard, and in consistency therewith, the love of God to all mankind, His gift of His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction on the grounds of Christ's all sufficient sacrifice, are regarded by this Church as vital to the Christian faith. And inasmuch as the Christian faith rests upon and the Christian consciousness takes hold of certain objective supernatural historic facts, especially the incarnation the atoning life and death and the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and His bestowment of His Holy Spirit, this Church regards those whom it admits to the office of the Holy Ministry as pledged to give a chief place in their teaching to these cardinal facts and to the message of redemption and reconciliation implied and manifested in them.

2. That the doctrine of God's eternal decrees, including the doctrine of election to eternal life, is held as defined in the Confession of Faith, Chapter III, Section I., where it is expressly stated that according to this doctrine, "neither is God the author of sin nor is violence offered to the will of the creature nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established," and further, that the said doctrine is held in connection and harmony with the truth - that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; that He has provided a salvation sufficient for all and adapted to all and offered to all in the Gospel, and that every hearer of the gospel is responsible for his dealing with the free and unrestricted offer of eternal life.

3. That while none are saved except through the mediation of Christ and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who worketh when and where and how it pleaseth Him, while the duty of sending the Gospel to the heathen who are sunk in ignorance, sin and misery is

imperative, and while the outward and ordinary means of salvation for those capable of being called by the Word are the ordinances of the Gospel, in accepting the Subordinate Standard it is not required to be held that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His grace to any who are without the pale of ordinary means as it may seem good in His sight.

4. That in holding and teaching according to the Confession of Faith, the corruption of man's nature as fallen, this Church also maintains that there remain tokens of man's greatness as created in the image of God, that he possesses a knowledge of God and of duty - that he is responsible for compliance with the moral law and the call of the Gospel, and that although unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God unto salvation he is yet capable of affections and actions which of themselves are virtuous and praiseworthy.

5. That liberty of opinion is allowed on matters in the Subordinate Standard not essential to the doctrine therein taught, the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity and peace.

6. That with regard to the doctrine of the Civil Magistrate and his authority and duty in the sphere of religion as taught in the Subordinate Standard the Church holds that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church, "and Head over all things of the Church, which is His body". It disclaims accordingly intolerant or persecuting principles and does not consider its office-bearers in subscribing the Confession as committed to any principle inconsistent with the liberty of conscience and the right of private judgement, declaring in the words of the Confession that "God alone is the Lord of the conscience".

(iii) Any proposed revision or abridgment of the Subordinate Standard of the Church or restatement of its doctrine or change of the formula shall before being adopted be remitted to the local assemblies and through them to the presbyteries, and no change shall be made without the consent of a majority of the local assemblies, three-fifths of the presbyteries of the whole Church and a majority of three-fifths of the members present when the final vote of the General Assembly is taken;

(iv) On any change being made in the Basis of Union in accordance with section (iii), if any congregation thereupon refuses to acquiesce in the change and determines to adhere to the original Basis of Union, the General Assembly is empowered (1) to allow such congregation to retain all its congregational property; or (2) to deal in such other way with the said property as to the Assembly may seem just and equitable;

(v) Any proposed change in either of the two preceding sections (iii) and (iv) shall be made only under the provisions contained in section (iii);

(vi) Formula to be signed by ministers and elders at their ordination or induction and by probationers on receiving licence:

I own and accept the Subordinate Standard of this Church with the explanations given in the articles contained in the Declaratory Statement, as an exhibition of the sense in which I understand the Holy Scriptures, and as a Confession of my Faith. I further own the purity of worship practised in this Church and the Presbyterian government thereof to be founded on the Word of God and agreeable thereto, and I promise that through the grace of God I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power shall in my station assert, maintain, and defend the Doctrine, Worship and Government of this Church.

It is therefore important that in their ministry, Presbyterians are given freedom to live, evangelise, and teach in a way that is consistent with this doctrinal position. In any direct sending relationship with Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, this should naturally occur as the doctrine and polity of the related Churches are in agreement.

When Presbyterians serve with Partner Mission Societies, it is important that the agreement safeguards the missionaries' liberty in the full and free presentation and practice of the whole counsel of God as understood in our own doctrinal basis. Entering into partnership with Mission Societies needs to be on the basis of our recognition of their effective evangelical missionary enterprise and their agreement with this principle. In other matters Presbyterian missionaries are to be subject to the rules of the Partner Mission

Society under which they serve. It is recognised that this will require an attitude of love and understanding towards others of differing opinions, but a firm agreement as proposed allows a clear theological direction for Presbyterians.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction: The Committee is grateful to the Lord for the opportunity of serving his church by fostering the work of Christian education. During the past three years the Committee has sought to do this by an ongoing programme of publications; ministry visits to the smaller states; and provision of a national distance education course.

While much more could be done in federal Christian education work, the Committee believes that the above activities make a significant and useful contribution which is sustainable within the modest resources of the Church. They supply the framework within which the Committee expects to continue in the next three years.

Publications: The Committee provides an ongoing series of self funding publications which support various aspects of Christian education.

Past publications of the Committee continue to be well used by the church, especially the reprint of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Dr JG Miller's Communicant's Work Book, The Church Members Kit, a package of several resources is also in increasing use as a tool preparing believers for membership of the Church.

Changes in publication technology have enabled the Committee to focus new publications into smaller sized units with shorter print runs, better cost recovery and immediacy of application.

Publications since 1994 are: The Bible in Ten Easy Lessons (a Biblical theology module for children); Introducing the Presbyterian Church of Australia (revision of a 1994 leaflet); At the Coal Face (a study workbook on the eldership); Which School for Your Child? (a leaflet for parents); When in Rome (a daily devotional workbook on Romans, published in conjunction with Presbyterian Youth NSW). In addition, the Committee has taken over publication and distribution of EQUIP, a twice yearly magazine designed to inform, motivate and support local Christian education volunteers. The Committee is grateful to those who assist with writing, editing, layout and proof reading.

A much delayed publication, The Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church of Australia should be released during 1997. Other publications in various stages of planning include a set of congregational studies for release during celebrations of the 1901 church union; a plain language text of the Westminster Confession based on the publication of Prof. Kelly; an introduction and commentary on the Confession. Members of the Committee are investigating song books for children and Christian software, with a possible eye to future publications.

The Committee was again asked to consider publication of a national Sunday School curriculum. The request was declined due to factors such as the high cost of curriculum development and publication; the educational and technical expertise needed; the variety of good curricula readily available; the limited resources of the Committee; and the higher priority of other tasks. The Committee does want to continue to publish resources for ministry to children, but anticipates these will be shorter length units of stand alone materials, such as the Bible in Ten.

Although it is not a Committee publication, the Committee warmly endorses and supports Walk With the Lord, a personal daily Bible study material from Onesimus Press of PO Box 6456, St Kilda Rd Central 3004. We believe it will help meet a need for meaty devotional material written from a perspective centred on the sovereign grace of God.

Ministry visits: The Committee visited Victoria in 1996 and South Australia in 1997, with the convener also visiting Western Australia in 1997. Two members of NSW Presbyterian Youth were taken on the visit to South Australia in order to strengthen youth ministry there. As in the past, a Committee meeting was held before the main purpose of the visits was undertaken in local and regional Christian education ministries. While demanding on Committee members and potentially expensive, these visits are much appreciated in the states receiving them.

The Committee plans to visit Western Australia, with the trip delayed until September 1999 in order to allow for the accumulation of funds.

The Committee has been concerned for some years at the lack of consistency in support for local church Christian education ministry, especially in the smaller states. Accordingly the Committee is supplementing its visits to these states by trying to foster Christian education partnerships between Queensland and South Australia; Victoria and Tasmania; NSW and Western Australia.

National distance course: The Certificate of Christian Studies continues to be used widely by the people of the church. Present and past students include lay preachers, elders, Sunday School teachers, Bible study leaders, potential candidates for the ministry, and other interested persons. Some students are completing subjects at a level superior to that of candidates in equivalent theological college courses. The course presently consists of five subjects studied over ten week periods. After the present revision of the course materials is completed, hopefully in 1998, the Committee will look at development of further course units and wider marketing.

Administration and finance: In between the state visits referred to above, the Committee has met via correspondence, thereby achieving a satisfactory balance between facilitating participation by all members and restraining costs.

The Committee part funded a Reformed Ecumenical Council connected ministry visit by the Convener to Kenya and the United Kingdom. This included talks on the reformed faith at a youth convention of the Reformed Church of East Africa and discussions on Christian education matters with relevant persons in the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland.

Mindful of the cost to the state churches of the GAA and its Committees and confident that its activities can be self-funded, the Committee has not sought a grant from the Finance Committee for the period 1997 - 2000.

Membership: The following nominations are made:

Convener: D. Burke

Western Australia: S. Bonnington and I. McIvor (ministers)

South Australia: J. Campbell (minister)

Victoria: A. Venn, B. Thomas and A. Lendon (ministers)

Tasmania: S. Nicholson (minister)

NSW: D. Davies & P. Boggs (elders); D. Burke & G. Smith (ministers)

Queensland: J. Mansfield and A. Newman (elders); R. Clark (minister)

D.A. BURKE, Convener.

CHURCH AND NATION ADDENDUM

WIK AND THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

In 1992 the High Court ruled in a land mark decision now known as "Mabo". This decision recognised for the first time a "Native Title" to land in Australia. Later in 1996 the High Court ruled in another important case called "Wik" which clarified the extent of that title. The history of the matter is sketched below.

Background Prior to European settlement in Australia the English common law provided for the rights of inhabitants of lands conquered by the British people. The common law (judge made law) stated that where the British people conquered inhabited lands, the rights to land of the inhabitants must be duly protected. On the other hand, where the British people settled in empty land (*terra Nullis*) all land title vested in the Crown.

However in the case of Australia, the situation did not unfold as might have been expected under these legal rules. Perhaps because the Australian Aborigines were largely nomadic, a legal precedent was established whereby Australia was considered empty. By this means the common law rights of Australia's indigenous people were not recognised.

Accordingly the settlement of Australia by Europeans proceeded with almost no provision or recognition of indigenous land rights. Land was regularly granted inhabitants.

In the more fertile parts of the country, land grants (most "in fee simple") gave title holders exclusive and permanent rights to possess and enjoy the land (that is, to the exclusion of anyone else.) However in the more arid parts of the country, a system of pastoral leases developed where the Crown gave pastoralists rights to pastoral use of the land, but not exclusively. Sometimes the rights of indigenous people to enjoy part of the lands was expressly preserved.

Mabo Finally in the Mabo case, the High Court was called upon to consider the rights of certain Torres Strait Islanders. These people, despite the success of so much European settlement in Australia, had been in continuous enjoyment of their island home from before the arrival of the British settlers. The High Court was asked to reverse the previous legal precedents which had pretended that Australia was empty at the time of European settlement. Given the opportunity to right a previous legal wrong, the High Court wisely reversed the previous precedent, and declared, that so far as it was still possible, any lands not already granted to settlers could be held by any indigenous people still in occupation.

Why did the High Court do this? To answer this would require a detailed reading of the judges' reasons. However, we may say that the decision was an honest one based on undeniable facts about the presence of indigenous Australians in large numbers enjoying the Australian continent at the time of European settlement. Further it applied legal principles which predated European settlement.

At the time of making its decision, the High Court made it clear that the long standing error that had seen the loss by indigenous Australians of vast amounts of their land, could not be effectively reversed with respect of most of that land. Any and all land grants which gave exclusive possession to settlers (and that means almost all the more fertile parts of the country), had extinguished any native title with respect to those lands. Nothing could now be done to reverse this. What could be done, was to make it possible to recognise the possible existence of native title to lands not so granted where indigenous people still enjoyed some connection and use of the land. What was not clear from the Mabo case, was the possible existence of Native Title where land was subject to Pastoral leases.

Wik Pastoral leases are grants by the Crown of rights to use specified lands but not exclusively. At the same time as the rights of the pastoralists, the leases protect the rights of other users (such as drovers and authorised timber cutters.) The question unanswered in Mabo was whether indigenous Native Title was also protected.

This uncertainty was clarified when the High Court handed down its decision in Wik.

In Wik, the High Court confirmed that pastoralists will continue to enjoy all the rights granted to them under their pastoral leases. This had never been in doubt. However, the court also stated that pastoral leases do not grant to lessees all possible rights to land. This means that indigenous people may still be able to establish some remnant of their common law Native Title with respect to some lands.

Our response In our respectful opinion, the High Court's decision was not only right in law but morally sound, and ought to be supported by the people of Australia, and the Christian church in particular.

The Native Title laws now recognised in Australia are not peculiar to our land. They have long been legally recognised in other countries like U.S.A., Canada and New Zealand. They are rightly recognised, because the inhabitants of conquered counties are vulnerable and deserve legal recognition and protection. As Christians we would claim that those who are weak and helpless are particularly worthy of our concern. Force of arms, even by our ancestors, does not justify theft.

Old Testament law recognised that certain members of society are particularly vulnerable and needed protection. In the patriarchal culture of Old Testament times, widows orphans and aliens were understood to be vulnerable and God in His grace provided reminders of this numerous times in the law. He placed obligations on the more robust members of society to consider those who were in need.

One of the things that generates our passion in the abortion "debate" is our compassion for the weak and needy and our desire to protect them from the selfish brutality

of the strong. By God's grace, this compassion we feel is a reflection in us of the character and thoughts of God. It should also be felt when we consider the issue of Native Title to land.

As we consider the history of the dealings by the "European" settlers of Australia with its indigenous inhabitants, we find a history of the oppression of the weak by the strong. Now that the High Court has recognised common law rights of indigenous people, we need to ensure that we have a compassionate attitude, and a just attitude to indigenous Australians, so that where possible, further losses of land do not occur.

Where land remains not wholly removed from the possession of indigenous people it seems appropriate (to the extent this is now possible) that we should now act to give the protection that ought to have been given in the days our land was first settled.

In the case of pastoral leases, pastoralists have been operating on the basis of leases and rights of use long established by government custom. They have always deemed these adequate, even though they do not provide for exclusive possession. Now that we are aware of the existence of Native Title rights it seems unnecessary and oppressive for the government to seize any of the remaining rights of use held by indigenous people.

We recognise the fallibility of all human beings, and that questionable Native Title "ambit" claims have been and will be made. However, there is still a foundational issue of justice involved in preserving rights of use (or "Native Title") of indigenous people, which even our common law recognised, and so should we.

The committee therefore commends to Assembly the deliverances relating to "Native Title".

P. C. MOORE, Convener.

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND AIDS TO DEVOTION ADDENDUM

THE COMMISSIONING OF A MISSIONARY

Missionaries should be commissioned by the Presbytery in which the missionary or missionary family resides, with due attention being given to the participation in the Commissioning Service by members of the local congregation, the Partner Society (where applicable) and the APWM.

SIMPLE ORDER FOR COMMISSIONING

Opening Scriptures

Hymn

Prayer

Scripture Readings

Explanation of the steps that led to the commissioning and description of the ministry envisaged

(perhaps using visual materials - video, transparencies, or a person from the new culture)

Personal testimony from the missionary/missionary family

Hymn

Sermon

Commissioning

Presentation of support gifts (or collection of monies for missionaries)

Hymn

Blessing, said or sing.

During the course of the Service the Moderator or another participant shall say:

In this act of commissioning/recommissioning our Church acknowledges that Jesus Christ our Lord calls all of His people to be witnesses to Him, both at home and overseas.

N..... has heard the gracious call from Jesus to follow Him. He has called for labourers to be thrust out into the harvest. He/she/they have been convinced that He wants him/her/them to be labourers in those white "fields which are ready for harvest" as missionaries with.....

Dear fellow worker/s in Christ: We rejoice that you have heard the command

of the Master to go and serve in His kingdom. In His name, we are about to commission/recommission you to the work to which you are designated, and to commend you to the gracious care of Jesus, whose commission you are to bear. But first, you will reaffirm your faith and integrity of godly purpose by answering the questions put to you:

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and do you confess anew that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord? (I/We do)

2. Do you believe in the Gospel of the love and grace of God, which declares that only through Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, He freely offers forgiveness and eternal life, and calls us into the fellowship and service of His kingdom? (I/We do)

3. Are love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire to commend Him by your word and life, so far as you know your own heart, your chief motives for accepting this opportunity to serve? (They are)

4. Do you promise, with the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk worthily of your calling, to discharge faithfully and cheerfully the duties of your office/respective offices, and to yield yourselves to the authority of those to whom the Church has committed the direction of your work? (I/We do)

5. Do you now confess and promise these things, through grace, as you would answer to your Lord? (I/We do)

Since no-one alone, is able to perform all these things, let us now pray God's strengthening for

Prayer for Missionary:

Father of power, love and mercy. We praise you for your wonderful grace in the Lord Jesus Christ that opened the way for our salvation and adoption into your family. We thank you for those who pointed us to the Way, the Truth and the Life. And now before us stand (and their family) whose call to enlighten others of the Christ is confirmed by your church in this commissioning. Neither they nor we can know the testings, rigours, pressures and adventures that await them in the forthcoming months. As we commit them to you in prayer, we do so with the confidence that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in them they will continue to learn lessons of patience, strength and contentment in the knowledge that the grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient for them, for His power is made perfect in their weakness.

Grant them safety in travel, diligence in adjustment to a new culture and the learning of a new language, grace in building friendships with others, integrity of life, a heart aflame for God, a constant passion to usher the lost into the kingdom of your dear Son, and a life of integrity and prayer that will demonstrate that they trust and rest in you alone.

O God, heed our prayer, and give rejoicing not only amongst angels that rejoice over sinners who repent, but also here amongst us, as these our dear friends are used as your servants in the place of your calling.

Keep us faithful as the home base in prayer, support, supply, communication and fellowship with those who separate from us, that we may be a team all serving the Lord our God, for the glory of your name alone.

Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

After prayer the Moderator shall say:

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, we declare you to be commissioned/recommissioned as a missionary/missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in full communion with the.....for your ministry in We commend you to the grace of God in the fulfilling of your loving service for your Lord and Saviour. And following the pattern of the Scriptures of the New Testament and as a sign of our partnership with you, we commission/recommission you to God, with the laying on of hands.

The Blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you".

In the event of a missionary being a candidate for ordination (or is already ordained as a minister of the church), use the QUESTIONS AT ORDINATION AND INDUCTION as set out in the GAA Code.

DECOMMISSIONING OF A MISSIONARY/MISSIONARY FAMILY

In that the Presbytery commissions the missionary at the beginning of the term of

service, it is appropriate that the Service of Decommissioning be in the hands of the same Presbytery (apart from what may transpire at the local congregational level). A Decommissioning Service could become part of an ordinary Presbytery meeting, occupying the space of about 45 minutes, with 20 minutes 'supper' to follow, to allow special warmth of welcome home, prior to the resumption of other business. As an alternative, the Decommissioning Service could be organised by the Presbytery at the home congregation of the missionary/missionary family at a mutually suitable time.

SIMPLE ORDER FOR DECOMMISSIONING OF MISSIONARIES

Opening Scriptures

Hymn

Prayer

Scripture Readings (maybe including Acts 14:21-28)

Report back to the church on the years of ministry by the missionary/missionary family

Expression of thanks to the family, and praise to God (presentation of settling-back gift)

Prayer of thanksgiving

Hymn

Sermon

Hymn

Conclusion of Service

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

M and F years ago your church, recognising the call to God to you, commissioned you to serve him in There you have served him well. You are now aware of the struggles and joys of serving him amongst people of another culture. You have lived and declared the gospel of our Lord Christ, and have witnessed the power of the Spirit of God in turning some from idols to serve the living and true God. At the same time you have known the grievous experience of being a witness to you Lord, but as a result of that ministry have seen some turn away from the light of life and continue to walk in darkness. Through the rigours of missionary life, you have learned more of the sovereign purposes of God who has given you the grace to cry, 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out'.

You have communicated with us, educated us, thanked us for our support, and prodded us to keep praying. Sometimes you have helped us to suffer godly shame in respect to our comforts, and you have pressed us to take stock of our priorities. It has been a privilege for us to be your partners in mission.

On behalf of the church we thank you, and trust that as the Lord opens doors for new ministry here in Australia, you will continue to grow in grace, and be a vessel of great usefulness in your new sphere of service.

DECOMMISSIONING PRAYER

Our gracious redeemer God. We approach your throne boldly through our only mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for calling us your own, and for the pathway along which you have led us as we have journeyed to the city whose architect and builder is our God.

We have so much appreciated our brother/sister who has/have been the extension of our arm in their faithful witness to Jesus in Thankyou for watching over them and keeping them safe, for the ministry of your Spirit who convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment, has kept them growing in grace, holiness and knowledge. Thankyou O Father, that our dear friend/s have been your instruments of grace to lead others to the Saviour of their souls, and to build up others in the most holy faith.

(When we commissioned them, their children were but 'little ones', and now we see them standing before us as young adults. O God be gracious to them and lead them on through life's pilgrimage in such a way that they will 'love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength'.)

Bless them richly as they settle back into life here in Australia. Open doors into new friendships and ministry such that they will continue strongly to use the gifts that you have entrusted to them for the glory of your name.

AMEN

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS - ADDENDUM

Since the report for the White Book was compiled there have been several developments and other applications.

19. Ministers Received.

Applications by the following minister from another Presbyterian Church has been approved under Clause 12 of the Regulations (minister under call):

The Rev. Hamdy AWAD (called to the Strathfield Arabic Presbyterian Church)

20. Applications Received.

In the White Book, Commissioners were advised that the Rev. Min Yaw LAW and Eui Soon HWANG had applied. Mr. Law has subsequently advised the Committee that he will not be proceeding with his application, and Mr. Hwang has joined the Gae Hyuk Presbyterian Church and does not want to be part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia any more.

Applications by the following ministers have been received, and details, with recommendations, will be supplied to commissioners during the Assembly:

The Rev. Danie MALAN

The Rev. Andre VAN OUDTSHOORN

21. Overseas Non-English Speaking Applicants English Test.

As reported in the White Book, the following applicants who were provisionally received by the 1994 Assembly were advised in February 1996 that if they have not attempted either the IELTS test or the internal English competence test by 31st July, 1997, the Committee intends to recommend to the 1997 General Assembly of Australia that their applications be terminated:

Jeung Oh, JOO, Chang Jin, KIM, Tae Hyun, KIM, Kang Wan, KO, and Keang Soo, LEE.

The Committee reports that none of the above has attempted either the external or the internal English test and that no contact with the Committee has been made by any of them. Therefore the Committee recommends that their applications be terminated.

22. Suggested alteration to Regulations.

The clause in the deliverance below reflects the wording previously advised in the White Book with slight verbal and punctuation alterations suggested by the Code Committee, none of which varies the sense of the clauses.

CHRIS BALZER, Convener.

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS - ADDENDUM TO THE ADDENDUM

Minister Received. The Rev. John Graham has been called to the parish of Bondi and he has accepted the call. The Committee thereupon received him as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Regulation 12.

Applications Received. Two further applications have been received by the Committee in the past two or three weeks. The Committee has dealt with them, but their late arrival has meant considerable inconvenience. It is very unsatisfactory dealing with applications so close to the meeting of the General Assembly. Details, with recommendations, will be supplied to commissioners during the Assembly on the following:

The Rev. Stephen WARWICK

The Rev. Neil BENFELL

Application Withdrawn. The Rev. Trevor Marshall has advised that because of changes to Australian immigration law, he is unlikely to be able to gain approval to emigrate and therefore he requests that his application be withdrawn.

CHRIS BALZER, Convener.

REPORTS UNDER ARTICLE X

Report to the 1997 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Article X of the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia.

The Presbyterian Church in Western Australia is a small denomination when compared to other local Christian groups and has its own share of difficulties and problems. However, despite

much human weakness and sinfulness by the grace of God alone, much encouraging growth has occurred in the last twenty years. As the Psalmist said long ago 'the LORD has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes'. At present over 900 adults, young people and children are regularly associated with PCWA congregations. There has been a welcome broadening of the ethnic composition of the church. The PCWA enjoys a fundamental doctrinal unity while ministering the gospel in diverse congregational settings.

The five Presbyterian congregations that remained Presbyterian in 1977 Bassendean, Bicton, Fremantle, Leederville and Peppermint Grove have progressively strengthened since then. Around these congregations and in some cases from them, seven new mission congregations have been organised and planted - Balga, Chinese, Guildford, Joondalup, Korean, Portuguese and Whitfords. The highly regarded Balga Detached Youth Work project is conducted in the Presbyterian congregation. The Presbyterian Women's Association is active in a number of congregations. The Braemar Presbyterian Homes for The Aged, situated in Bicton (Braemar Lodge - opened in 1985), East Fremantle (Braemar House - opened in 1997 at a cost of \$4.5m), and Willagee (Braemar Village - opened in 1994 at a cost of \$3.9m) are all operating in new, well appointed buildings. The Presbyterian Inland Mission - David Shearer Patrol, began ministry in WA during 1996 and is reaching a vast area of the south-west/east of WA with the message of Christ. The Presbyterian Country Ministries has supplied a range of correspondence Bible study courses to people from the Kimberleys in the north, on the Goldfields and down in the South-West. Four missionaries from the PCWA are currently serving overseas. One couple is currently preparing for the Presbyterian ministry and another couple is just beginning home missionary work. A number of experienced ministers have joined/or wish to join the PCWA from other denominations.

The PCWA is involved informally in a wide range of ministries with other believers. The PCWA was a foundation member of the Presbyterian and Reformed Council of Western Australia in 1994, joining with the Reformed Churches of Australia and the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Australia. The growing relationship between the three WA Presbyterian-Reformed denominations has led so far to two joint outreach ministries. The PCWA is working with the WPC at the University of WA on Sunday nights on the COCOS student ministry and with the WPC and the RCA in Fremantle on Sunday evenings in the SNIF 'cappuccino strip' outreach.

While much has been achieved, much more remains to be done. The PCWA has NO congregations outside of Perth, there are NO schools operating under the direction of the PCWA and most of the newer congregations are without church buildings/manses. The social mission of the PCWA needs to expand into new areas of care. The PCWA urgently needs to the help of the wider Presbyterian Church of Australia for the work to proceed forward! To God be the glory, great things he has done!

STUART BONNINGTON, Clerk of Assembly
Presbyterian Church in Western Australia.

From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia.

**REPORT BY THE BUSINESS CONVENER ON THE HISTORY OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S DEALING WITH MATTERS PERTAINING
TO WOMEN IN THE ELDERSHIP**

Submitted to the Assembly, at the request of the Code Committee, to assist Commissioners in matters that may come before the Assembly during the 1997 Sederunts.

In October 1958, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria resolved to overture the General Assembly of Australia asking it to declare that women are eligible for the Eldership within the Presbyterian Church of Australia (Vic. B.B. 1958 Min. 273/274).

This Overture was sustained by the 1959 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and sent down to State Assemblies and Presbyteries for reply to the questions: "*Are you agreeable that women should be declared eligible for eldership within the Presbyterian Church of Australia*". (G.A.A. B.B. 1959 Min. 132).

The returns to this remit were presented to the 1962 Assembly which, thereafter, sustained the overture from the Victorian Assembly to:

- "(a) Appoint a Committee to examine and define the doctrine of the Eldership and the place and function of women in the life of the Church, particularly in relation to the office of eldership; and
- (b) Forward any relevant conclusions to State Assemblies and to Presbyteries for their information and to report to the General Assembly of Australia in September 1965."

At the 1964 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the Committee on the Service of the Laity reported (G.A.A. B.B. 1964 Min. 153), and the Assembly resolved as follows:

"That the Assembly:

1. *Receive the report.*
2. *Instruct the Committee to examine further the doctrine of eldership with a view to bringing to the next Assembly a definite statement on the matter.*
3. *Instruct the Committee to continue investigation of the question of women in the ministry.*
4. *Instruct the Committee to examine the nature of the office of deaconess in the Church in consultation with the Committee on the Training of Women Workers.*
5. *Authorise the Committee to co-opt such specialists in the fields of its concern as it considers necessary and to set up commissions to study the general problems mentioned in the report and to bring the findings of these commissions, with recommendations, to the next Assembly.*
6. *Reappoint the Committee as follows: _____"*

The Committee on the Service of the Laity in the Church and Community in 1967 reported *inter alia*,

"After careful study and consideration of the Church of Scotland Report, your Committee decided to endorse it in general terms, as an adequate account of the origins and doctrine of the Eldership, and to append it to its own Report as a basic study document As far as this Committee can discover, there are no legal barriers in the Code of the General Assembly of Australia against the admission of women to Eldership. However since a particular doctrine of the Eldership is being advanced, on the basis of which it is asserted that there are no valid theological objections to the admission of women to this office, and that it is a service in the Church which is appropriate for both men and women, then Barrier Act procedure will be required to approve the doctrine proposed. To this end an Overture is being submitted to the General Assembly. Should the Overture be sustained, the Convener will move that it be sent down under the Barrier Act. If Clause 2 of the Proposed Deliverance is approved by the General Assembly, and the proposed Overture sent down under the Barrier Act, State Assemblies and Presbyteries will have full opportunity to consider the doctrinal basis of the Eldership set out in this report and the appended Church of Scotland report, and on the basis of these considerations to approve or

disapprove the Overture. Should the General Assembly accept the view that there are no doctrinal barriers against women serving as Elders and the State Assemblies at request of this Court take the appropriate steps to remove any legal barriers in their respective Codes, it would not mean that Sessions were obliged forthwith to accept women as additional Elders. It would simply mean that if and when a Session decided to add to its numbers, male and female communicants would be eligible for election on the same terms and conditions.: (pp. 183-184).

In 1967, upon receipt of the Committee's report, the General Assembly of Australia resolved (G.A.A. B.B. 1967 Min. 58):

"That the Assembly:

- (1) *Refer to State Assemblies and Presbyteries for consideration and Comment, the Reports of the Committee on the Service of the Laity in the Church and the Community and the Church of Scotland Panel on Doctrine anent the Doctrine of the Eldership, such replies to be forwarded the Convener by 31st December, 1969.*
- (2) *Instruct the Committee to continue its studies on the function of the Eldership and report thereupon to the next Assembly.*
- (3) *Instruct the Committee to continue investigation of the question of women in the ministry.*
- (4) *Instruct the Committee to examine the nature of the office of the deaconess in the Church in consultation with the Committee on the Training of Women Workers.*
- (5) *Authorise the Committee to co-opt such specialists in the fields of its concern as it considers necessary and to set up groups to study particular problems and to present he finding of these groups with any appropriate recommendations to the next Assembly.*
- (6) *Appoint the Committee as follows: _____ "*

The Committee also presented an Overture (No. 13) to the 1967 General Assembly seeking that the Assembly declare:

- (1) *That the Presbyterian Church of Australia holds the doctrine of the Eldership as set forth in the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government, under the heading "Other Church-Governors", which states:
"As there were in the Jewish Church elders of the people joined with the priests and levites in the government of the church; so Christ, who hath instituted government, and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his church, beside the ministers of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the minister in the government of the church, which officers reformed churches commonly call Elders."*
- (2) *That on the basis of the foregoing doctrine, the Eldership is a service within the Church which can be performed appropriately by men and women alike."*

The Assembly after sustaining the Overture declared at min. 131:

"That the Assembly:

- (1) *Declare that the Presbyterian Church of Australia holds the doctrine of the Eldership as set forth in the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government under the heading "other Church Governors."*
- (2) *Declare that on the basis of the foregoing doctrine the Eldership is a service within the Church which can be performed appropriately by men and women."*

As far as can be ascertained, no report on replies from State Assemblies and Presbyteries ever came to the General Assembly in subsequent years in accordance with Min. 58.1 B.B. 1967. Nor is there any evidence that the Overture went down to State Assemblies and Presbyteries under Barrier Act Procedure. Even if the procedure had been followed and the overture finally sustained, then, according tot he opinion expressed in the Report quoted above, it was still a matter for each State Assembly to amend its Code. In other words, it was an issue which also concerned church government, the final arbiters

of which were the individual State Assemblies.

The next occasion on which the General Assembly was required to deal with the issue of women in the eldership was in 1985 when an appeal came to the Assembly against a decision of the Queensland Assembly (Min. 144 1984) by which the Assembly rescinded Min. 76.4 of the 1969 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. In that minute it was agreed:

"That the Assembly: ... Note the decision of the 1967 G.A.A. min. 131 (2) viz. That, inter alia, 'the Eldership is a service within the Church which can be performed appropriately by men and women' and that the Code of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, Rules 14 and 213 put no impediment in the way of electing women as elders."

This decision of the 1969 Qld. Assembly took place before the Overture (in which the 1967 G.A.A. made the declaration) was ever sent down and approved by the State Assemblies and Presbyteries. Nor was such ever sent down and approved. Therefore, on this basis, and on the basis that Barrier Act procedure was never carried out to obtain a different interpretation of the Qld. Code than that held from its inception, the Qld. Assembly rescinded its 1969 decision thereby maintaining its pre-1969 understanding of the eldership.

When the appeal against this 1984 decision by the Qld. Assembly came before the G.A.A. in 1985 at min. 73, the competency of the appeal was questioned (on the ground that it represented an appeal on a matter of government in which the Qld. Assembly had supreme jurisdiction in terms of the Articles of Agreement). The Moderator agreed and ruled the Appeal to be incompetent. The then Law Agent challenged the ruling, by moving disagreement with the Moderator's ruling. The motion was disapproved and the Moderator's ruling was upheld. Consequently, the 1985 G.A.A. deemed the appeal against the 1984 decision of the Qld. Assembly to be a matter of government and therefore not appealable to the G.A.A.

In 1991, the G.A.A. had before it an appeal against a 1990 decision of the Qld. Assembly in which the latter had dismissed an appeal against a decision of Presbytery of Brisbane in which the presbytery declared the election and induction of a Miss Murdoch to the Session of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church to be invalid. When the appeal came before the Assembly (Min. 113 1991), its competency was challenged. The moderator ruled the appeal incompetent. The Moderator's ruling was incorporated in the records of the Assembly as follows:

"The Appeal is incompetent insofar as matters referred to therein are matters in which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland is the final court of appeal."

P. BARSON, Business Convener.

MODERATOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES REFORMED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Fifty years after it began in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Reformed Ecumenical Council (earlier called the Reformed Ecumenical Synod) held its quadrennial Assembly this year from 3-16 June. Delegates came from over 29 member churches in 20 countries, and it was very noticeable how strong a role was played by the delegates from third-world churches. So strong was the African group of member churches that an evaluation is to be made by the year 2000 whether the secretariat should be moved there.

My wife and I were very pleased to be present throughout the meetings, which were held on the campus of Calvin College and Seminary. The meetings partly overlapped with the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) also on the same location, so that delegates were invited to attend the opening of the CRC Synod and also a special multicultural evening. On the first Sunday in Grand Rapids, delegates were taken to CRC churches with host families and then entertained for lunch in their homes. All the CRC Synod members joined with the REC one evening in the Van Andel Museum Centre in central Grand Rapids for a special banquet to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the REC.

Dr Henk de Waard from the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, was elected president of the RFC for the second time (he had served previously in Athens in 1992), and he had an able leadership team (from Canada, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia) to assist him.

Religious pluralism was the major issue before us at the conference and council meetings. Dr Klaas Runia gave the keynote address on "Why Christianity of all Religions?", and then Drs Ray van Leeuwen and Allan Harman gave addresses which directed attention to the biblical data on the question. The REC reaffirmed *our conviction in Jesus Christ as our unique and only Saviour and Lord, whose name is the only name under heaven and earth that we have to proclaim, the only name by which we are saved.*

Some very practical issues were also considered. There were important discussions on how best to prepare our young people to face the challenge already with them of being the church of today. They are going to take the Gospel into the 21st century, and they need encouragement and help as they prepare for that task.

There was also a call to respond to a world in poverty and pain. A variety of reasons lie behind that poverty, some of which (such as crushing international debts) stem from the Western world, while others (such as military dictatorships) stem from political situations in the third world itself. In connection with this last point the Assembly gave consideration to the situation in Nigeria. Advice was taken from the Nigerian delegates present, and a letter was sent to General Sani Abacha, the military leader, asking for immediate restoration of civil rights, including freedom of speech and association. The overall theme of the assembly in Grand Rapids was "Rejoice in the Lord! Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come". The REC member churches now have four years to digest and reflect upon the outcome of the Grand Rapids meeting, and then to prepare for the next meeting.

On the question of finance our contribution to the REC for some time past has been \$1000 per annum. The Council made a request that our church increase this contribution to \$3000 per annum.

The conference and the council meeting itself were very stimulating, and I was particularly struck by the ability and spiritual maturity of many of the participants from third world countries. While the REC has had, and continues to have problems, yet I feel we need to maintain our presence in it, as contact with other reformed churches on an international scale is very important. We cannot afford to cut ourselves off entirely from ecumenical relationships. One problem I met was that it was my first time at an REC meeting, while quite a few of the delegates had attended several meetings. My feeling is that we should appoint a delegate who can carry on our ecumenical contacts over several meetings of the REC. The next meeting is scheduled for Indonesia in 2000. Our geographical proximity to Indonesia gives us an opportunity to have other non-voting delegates and observers present as well.

The International Conference of Reformed Churches

This conference was due to be held in Seoul, South Korea in August of this year, and I duly notified the organising committee that I hoped to be present as an official observer. However, the organisers have delayed the conference until October 15-23. Speakers at the conference include Dr Robert Beckett from Northern Ireland and Dr Richard Gaffin from Westminster Theological Seminary. On the two Sundays we will be in Korea, I expect to be preaching in Kosin Presbyterian Churches in the Seoul area.

Allan M Harman, Moderator General.

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
THE FORTY THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

FIRST SEDERUNT

1. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church, Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, at 7 p.m. on Monday 8 September, 1997, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia convened. Public worship was conducted by the Right Reverend the Moderator, the Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman. Thereafter the Assembly was constituted with prayer.

2. Roll of Assembly: The Clerk laid on the table the list of commissioners appointed to this Assembly by the State assemblies and presbyteries of the Church. It was resolved that the list of commissioners as made up be the Roll of this Assembly.

3. Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. D. Ferguson, R. Green and D. Napier.

4. Associates: Pastor Rossie Meake, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, being present, was associated, welcomed by the Moderator and addressed the Assembly.

5. Election of Moderator: The Clerk laid on the table the report of the Moderator's Nominating Committee. The report was received. It was resolved that the Assembly accept the nomination of the Moderator's Nominating Committee and elect the Rev. Bruce Harold Christian, Minister at Rose Bay, Sydney, N.S.W., as Moderator of the Assembly. The Rev. B.H. Christian was welcomed and inducted into office with prayer by the past Moderator, took the chair and delivered an address.

6. Motion of Loyalty: The following Motion of Loyalty, submitted by the Business Convener, was approved, the Assembly joining in the singing of "God save the Queen".

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty:

May it please Your Majesty:

We, your faithful subjects, Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia convened in General Assembly at Sydney on the eighth day of September, One thousand, nine hundred and ninety seven, take leave to assure Your Majesty of our loyalty and devotion to Your Person and to the Throne.

We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour of mankind may, by His grace, sustain and uphold Your Majesty in His providential care, and that He may grant to Your Majesty personally all the gifts needful for the discharge of the exacting duties of your high office.

At this sad and distressing time we especially assure you and your family of our prayers and support. May the God of all Grace comfort and keep you all, and grant you His peace.

We also pray that Christ, through His unchanging Word and by the guidance of His Spirit, will grant to your Majesty, in your demanding position of leadership in church and nation, wisdom, integrity, courage, and faithfulness to Him.

We have the honour to be Your Majesty's faithful servants, Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Signed in our name and in our presence at our appointing. Bruce Christian, Moderator.

7. Prayers for the Australian Parliament: Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved that the Assembly forward to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate of the Australian Parliament assurances of the regular prayers of the people of the Presbyterian Church of Australia for the nation's elected representatives in the exercise of their responsibilities.
The motion was seconded and approved.

8. Representatives of Other Churches: The following representatives of Other Churches, being present, were welcomed by the Moderator:
The Rev. J. Mavor, President of the Uniting Church in Australia; Rev. L. Otto, representing the President of the Lutheran Church of Australia; Lieutenant Colonel D. Clarke, representing the Territorial Commissioner of the Salvation Army; Rev. J.H. Edmonstone, President of the Baptist Union of Australia; Rev. Dr. Bruce Kaye, representing the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia; Rev. H. de Waard, representing the Reformed Ecumenical Council; Bishop P. Ingham, representing the Roman Catholic Church in Australia; Mr. B. Berryman, representing the Fellowship of Congregational Churches; the Rev. R. Smith, President of the Church of Christ; and the Rev. L. Douma, representing the Reformed Churches of Australia.
Rev. H. de Waard, responded to the Moderator's welcome on behalf of the representatives of other Churches.

9. Business Committee: The report of the Business Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. P.J. Barson submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) (a) Determine the hours of meeting to be:

Morning Sederunt	9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
Lunch Interval	1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.
Afternoon Sederunt	2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Tea Interval	5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.
Evening Sederunt	7.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
- (b) Determine that morning and afternoon tea breaks may be taken for up to 20 minutes, the taking of each recess to be at the discretion of the Moderator.
- (2) Declare speeches to be limited as follows:

Convener of Committee speaking to report	15 mins.
All other speakers	5 mins.
Overturists and Petitioners	10 mins.
Appellants, Complainants, and Respondents - per party	15 mins.
- (3) Declare that the total time allowed for questions during the presentation of each report, overture, petition, appeal, or complaint be limited to 30 mins., such time to be subject to extension by resolution of the house.
- (4) Appoint the Ballot Committee as follows: Dr. P.E. Lush (Convener), Rev. A. Slater, Messrs. J.C. Mackillop and A.D. Turner with power to co-opt.
- (5) Appoint the members of the Ballot Committee as Tellers of the Assembly.
- (6) Appoint the Committee to scrutinise the minutes as follows: Rev S. Bonnington (Convener), J. Webster, K.D. Murray and Mr. J. Tucker with power to co-opt.
- (7) Declare that notices of motion must be in triplicate.
- (8) Appoint Mr. P.J. Graham, OAM as Assembly Officer.
- (9) Declare that video and/or audio recording of Assembly business (except for the opening service and the communion service) shall not be permitted for the purposes of reproduction or broadcasting without the express permission of the Assembly.
- (10) Approve the Order of Business for Tuesday 9 September, 1997.
- (11) Approve generally the order of business.
- (12) Declare that the Assembly should not receive, as a communication, a document which could be submitted in another form but may receive as a communication,

- (i) the resignation of an Assembly Officer;
 - (ii) any other communication which has been approved by the Business Committee.
- (13) Appoint the Moderator-General or his representative as the Assembly's representative to the Assemblies of overseas churches without any commitment to costs.
- (14) Grant Rev. Dr. H. de Waard, Chairman of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, a period of 10 minutes to address the Assembly at a time convenient to the Assembly and Dr. de Waard.
- (15) Take no further action to rationalise its Committee structures.

10. Leave to meet: The Session at St. Paul's, Armidale, N.S.W. was granted leave to meet on Tuesday 9 September, 1997 at 7.15 p.m.

11. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 1 to 68 were laid on the table.

12. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. in the Chalmers Church for the celebration of Holy Communion and thereafter for the transaction of business whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.
PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

SECOND SEDERUNT

13. Holy Communion: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Tuesday 9 September, 1997 at 9.30 a.m. the Assembly met for the celebration of Holy Communion. The Solemn Service was conducted by the Moderator assisted by the Rev. P.M. Campbell, J.E.D. Seaton, K.W. Morris, and the following Elders: Dr. P.E. Lush, Messrs. C.M. Langford, C.K. Johnston, K.P. Mar, P.J. Graham, D. Nicholds, R. Pilkington, A. Bignill, F. Young, Dr. D. Pilgrim, Messrs. D. Turner, R. Arstall, J. Mackillop and L. Jackson.

14. Assembly Constituted: At the conclusion of the Solemn Service the Assembly was constituted with prayer, the Moderator presiding.

15. Memorial Minute: Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved:
That the Assembly:

- (1) Note the death of the Very Rev. Norman Monsen, Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia 1982-1985, on 6 February, 1995.
- (2) Give thanks to God for the life and faithful ministry of Norman Monsen as a parish minister, Ministry and Mission Superintendent in N.S.W., Convener of the Presbyterian Inland Mission and Moderator of the General Assembly of Australia.

The motion was seconded and approved.
The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer.

16. Suspension of Standing Orders: Standing Orders were suspended to allow an amendment to be made to the Roll of Assembly.

17. Roll of Assembly: It was moved and seconded that the Assembly replace the name of the Rev. P.C. Moore with the name of the Rev. A.N. McDonald as a commissioner for the Presbytery of the Hastings.
The motion was approved.

18. Standing Orders Resumed: Standing Orders were resumed.

19. Leave to meet: The Session at St. Andrew's, Launceston, Tasmania, was granted leave to meet on Wednesday, 10 September, 1997.

20. Report of the Retiring Moderator: The report of the retiring Moderator was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. Prof. Allan M. Harman addressed the House.

Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved that the Assembly give thanks to God for the work and witness of the Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman during his term of office as Moderator of the General Assembly and for the loving and supportive ministry of Mrs. Harman and commend them for their work for the Church.

The motion was seconded and approved.

21. Ad Hoc Committee on the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia: The report of the ad hoc Committee on the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman submitted the deliverances.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Hold the next meeting of the G.A.A. in 2001.
- (2) (a) Open in Sydney in the Sydney Town Hall, if it is available, on the evening of 24 July, 2001 and continue with its business on the 25, 26 and 27 July.
- (b) Give recognition of the past 100 years of the existence of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, with thanksgiving to God for all the blessings of these years.

- (c) Have a definite focus on the mission of our church in Australia in the new period of our existence as a denomination.
 - (d) Invite representatives from overseas churches with whom our church has had close association over the last 100 years to attend (at their own expense), or to send appropriate greetings, and that representatives of other denominations in Australia be similarly invited.
- (3) On the Sunday following the Assembly a special service of thanksgiving be held in St. Andrews, Canberra, as a recognition of the place and witness of our church on the national scene, and as an opportunity to have political and diplomatic leaders present.
 - (4) Request State assemblies and presbyteries to organise suitable events on a local or regional basis.
 - (5)
 - (a) Establish a centenary fund to which State assemblies, congregations and individuals be asked to contribute.
 - (b) Use this fund for a mission related project by and amongst the aboriginal people.
 - (c) Authorise the Ad Hoc Centenary Committee, after consulting with other relevant bodies, to determine the exact nature of the project.
 - (6) Commemorate the occasion by producing a history of the General Assembly and request the Rev. David Burke and Dr. Allan Harman to edit this volume, and that the Finance Committee be asked to set aside a sum of \$10,000 for the publication of this book.
 - (7) Re-appoint the Ad Hoc Committee to carry out the agreed plans for the centenary celebrations, with membership comprising Dr. Allan Harman (Convener), the Moderator-General, the Clerks, the Convener of the Finance Committee, Rev. Peter Barson, Stuart Bonnington, Michael Grieve, Steven Nicholson, Gordon Fullerton, David Burke, the President and Secretary of the Federal PWA, Miss Karen Astles, Messrs. S.H. Fraser, Peter Graham, and Marton Murany.

22. Returns to Remits: The report on Returns to Remits was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan submitted the deliverance.

Clause (1) to (3) were approved.

Clause (4) was moved and seconded.

It was moved and seconded that the debate be adjourned.

The motion was disapproved.

Clause (4) was approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) In accordance with returns from State assemblies and presbyteries upon a remit sent down under the Barrier Act to enact a new Article of Agreement (B.B. 1994 Min. 20) enact a new Article of Agreement XV as follows:
 - 1. In the exercise of powers conferred on the General Assembly by Article IV of these Articles of Agreement, the General Assembly may make rules and regulations from time to time including but not limited to:
 - (a) standing orders for meetings of the General Assembly;
 - (b) regulations for the establishment and functioning of committees of the General Assembly;
 - (c) regulations regarding office-bearers of the General Assembly; and
 - (d) rules for the exercise of discipline in the church.
 - 2. The General Assembly may by separate resolution or within such rules or regulations prescribe procedures for the amendment repeal or replacement of specified rules or regulations.
 - 3. Whilst this Article expressly authorises the making of rules and regulations by the General Assembly; such power is regarded as inherent in the powers of the General Assembly granted by Article IV and has at all times been

exercised by the General Assembly.

- (2) In accordance with returns from State assemblies and presbyteries upon a remit sent down under the Barrier Act concerning a revised Code of Discipline (B.B. 1994 Min. 21) confirm the enactment of the Code of Discipline by the 1994 General Assembly of Australia (B.B. 1994 Min. 21(2)).
- (3) In accordance with returns from State assemblies and presbyteries upon a remit sent down under the Barrier Act concerning the recognition of theological halls (B.B. 1994 Min. 78) amend Article VIII by the addition of the following clause:
 - (h) The Colleges/Halls the General Assembly shall recognise for the training of candidates for the ministry shall be the Queensland Presbyterian Theological Hall, the NSW Presbyterian Theological Centre and the Victorian Presbyterian Theological College.
- (4) In accordance with returns from State assemblies and presbyteries upon a remit sent down under the Barrier Act to amend Question (1) asked of Ministers, Elders and Licentiates (B.B. 1994 Min. 112) dismiss Overture (xii) (B.B. 1994).

23. Code: The report of the Code Committee was laid on the table and received. The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan submitted the deliverance. The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:
That the Assembly:

- (1) Congratulate the Procurator, Mr. G.K. Downes, Q.C., on the award of Member of the Order of Australia in the 1997 Australia Day Honours.
- (2) Authorise the issue of Constitution, Procedure and Practice on computer disk prepared by the Rev. M. Wharton, for a suitable charge.

24. Overture (vii): An overture from the Code Committee concerning the revision of the Articles of Agreement was taken up and received.

Mr. S.H. Fraser and the Rev. Dr. Paul Logan stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice Mr. S.H. Fraser moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice, Mr. S.H. Fraser moved:

That the Assembly:

Send the overture to State assemblies and presbyteries under the Barrier Act procedure provided for in Article XIII, with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2000.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. C.D. Balzer moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Amend the motion by adding words so that the motion will read as follows:

Send to State Assemblies and presbyteries under the Barrier Act procedure provided for in Article XIII, with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2000, the Overture amended as follows:

Addition of a new clause after 2.1(f) to read as follows:

re-admission to the ministry of previous ministers of the Church;

Addition of words so that clause 8.1 will read:

The Reception of Ministers Committee deals with applications by ministers and licentiates (or equivalent) of other denominations to be received as ministers of the Church, and with applications for reinstatement from people who have previously resigned from the ministry of the Church.

Addition of words so that clause 8.3 will read:

Ministers and licentiates from other presbyterian churches and people who have previously resigned from the ministry of the Church who seek to be accepted as ministers of the Church may be admitted by:

- (a) the General Assembly,
- (b) a State Assembly if so authorised by the General Assembly,
or
- (c) the Reception of Ministers Committee
in accordance with Regulations enacted by the General Assembly so
as to secure uniformity of method of admission.

The amendment was seconded and approved.

The motion as amended was approved.

25. Overture (ix): An overture from the Presbytery of Sydney concerning the qualifications of a Procurator, was taken up and received.

The Rev. C.D. Balzer and P.F. Cooper stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. C.D. Balzer moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and disapproved.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Assembly dismiss the overture.

26. Finance: The report of the Finance Committee was laid on the table and received.

Mr J. Mill submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (6) were approved.

Clause (7) was moved and seconded.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 38)

27. Notice of Motion: Notices of Motion 69 to 73 were laid on the table.

28. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

THIRD SEDERUNT

29. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Tuesday 9 September, 1997, at 2 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

30. Acting Clerk of Assembly: It was resolved that the Assembly appoint the Rev. P.J. Barson Acting Clerk of Assembly for the hearing of the appeal of the Rev. G.N. Guy and the dissent and complaint of the Rev. F. Avent.
The Rev. P.J. Barson made the declaration to faithfully discharge the duties of the office.

31. Appeal: An appeal against a decision of the N.S.W. General Assembly, together with an extract minute of that Assembly, was received from the Rev. G.N. Guy. The parties were called to the bar.
The Moderator was asked to rule on the competence of the appeal.
The Moderator ruled the appeal incompetent on the grounds that the General Assembly of Australia had no jurisdiction to hear this particular matter.
The parties were removed from the bar.

32. Dissent and Complaint: A dissent and complaint against a decision of the N.S.W. General Assembly, together with an extract minute of that Assembly was received from the Rev. F. Avent.
The complainant, the Rev. F. Avent, addressed the Assembly.
The Rev. D.A. Burke and P.F. Cooper appeared as respondents for the N.S.W. General Assembly.
The Complainant was heard in reply.
Questions were asked.
The parties were removed from the bar.
The parties were allowed to remain in the House to hear the discussion.
It was moved and seconded that the dissent and complaint be sustained.
The motion was approved.
It was moved and seconded that Overture (vi) be referred back to the N.S.W. General Assembly for any future action.
The motion was approved.
The parties were recalled to the bar and advised of the decision by the Moderator.
The parties were removed from the bar.

33. Relations with Other Churches: As a report on relations with other Churches a report on the Reformed Ecumenical Council was laid on the table and received.
Pursuant to notice the Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman moved.
That the Assembly:
Pay an annual fee of \$3,000 to the Reformed Ecumenical Council until the next Assembly.
The motion was seconded and approved.
Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.A. Burke moved:
That the Assembly:
(1) Appoint the Moderator General as a delegate to the Reformed Ecumenical Council and fund his attendance at the REC conference in Indonesia in 2000 A.D.
(2) Authorise the Moderator General and the Clerk of the G.A.A., in consultation with the convener of any relevant committee, to appoint further delegates to the REC on the basis that the G.A.A. is not responsible for their costs.
The motion was seconded and approved.
The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:
That the Assembly:
(1) Pay an annual fee of \$3,000 to the Reformed Ecumenical Council until the next Assembly.
(2) Appoint the Moderator General as a delegate to the Reformed Ecumenical Council

and fund his attendance at the REC conference in Indonesia in 2000 A.D.

- (3) Authorise the Moderator General and the Clerk of the G.A.A., in consultation with the convener of any relevant committee, to appoint further delegates to the REC on the basis that the G.A.A. is not responsible for their costs.

34. Communication (x): A communication was received from the Reformed Churches of Australia concerning future discussions.

Pursuant to notice, the Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman moved.

That the Assembly:

Instruct the committee on Relations with Other Churches to enter into discussions with the Reformed Churches of Australia to establish grounds for closer cooperation.

The motion was seconded and approved.

35. Defence Forces Chaplaincy: The report of the Defence Forces Chaplaincy Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

- (1) Amend the regulations of the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee to read as follows and declare them to have effect forthwith.

3.8 DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

1. At each meeting the Assembly shall appoint a committee of twelve (12) members to be the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee which shall act for the General Assembly of Australia in matters concerned with Department of Defence, and chaplaincy services associated with the Australian Defence Force.
 2. Casual vacancies on the Committee arising between meetings of the General Assembly, shall be filled by the Committee.
 3. The Committee shall appoint its own executive.
 4. The Presbyterian Member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS) shall be the Convener of the Committee who shall be a Minister of the Word and Sacraments.
 5. The nomination of the Convener of the Committee as the Presbyterian Member of the RACS shall be made to the appropriate Federal Minister by the Moderator-General.
 6. The Presbyterian Member of the RACS shall be answerable to the General Assembly and its Committee at all times and shall not have authority to commit the Presbyterian Church to change of policy or practice relating to chaplaincy within the Defence Force without the approval of the General Assembly of Australia or its Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee.
 7. As the authorised representative of the Presbyterian Church to the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, the Presbyterian member shall:
 - (a) offer advice to the RACS on matters of denominational policy as it relates to the religious and spiritual well-being of all members of the Defence Forces;
 - (b) offer advice on the appointment of Principal Chaplains within the three services;
 - (c) nominate Ministers of the Word and Sacraments for appointment as Chaplains to the Defence Force subject to the approval of the Committee;
 - (d) maintain an interest in and exercise pastoral care and oversight of Chaplains, service personnel and their families;
 - (e) assist, wherever possible, Chaplains departing the Defence Force in the process of resettlement.
- (2) Note that there remain many vacancies for ministers to serve in the Defence Force, particularly in the Reserves or part-time.
- (3) Encourage ministers to give consideration to service in the Defence Force.

36. Christian Education: The report of the Christian Education Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. D.A. Burke submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Commend the publications of the Christian Education Committee to sessions and presbyteries.
- (2) Encourage the Committee to continue its scheduled visits to the smaller states for Christian Education ministry.

37. National Journal: The report of the National Journal Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. R.P.F. Benn submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (7) were approved.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 39).

38. Finance: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the Finance Committee (Min. 26).

Clause (7) was approved.

Clauses (8) to (10) were approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Receive and note the Balance Sheets as at 31 December, 1996 and associated statements.
- (2) Approve the reimbursement of the actual expenses incurred for travelling and accommodation of commissioners not resident in the city in which the General Assembly is held on the following basis:
 - Commissioners having to travel more than 750 km by rail
 - return economy class air fares
 - Commissioners from Tasmania
 - return economy class air fares
 - Commissioners having to travel 750 km or less by rail
 - return rail fares;
 - where a train does not run - return coach fares
- (3) (a) Until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise, approve payment of Honoraria as follows:

Clerk of Assembly	\$1,000 for each General Assembly
Deputy Clerk	\$ 600 for each General Assembly
Assistance to Clerks	\$ 400 for each General Assembly
Business Convener	\$ 850 for each General Assembly
- (b) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay appropriate honoraria to one or more persons acting in positions listed in (a):
- (4) (a) Approve the following provisions for the Moderator assuming office in September, 1997, and for succeeding Moderators until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise:
 - (i) An allowance of up to \$20,000 to cover the costs of travel, accommodation, telephone, postage, stationery, secretarial expenses for the total period of office (three years);
 - (ii) An allowance sufficient to cover the cost of moderatorial court dress;
 - (iii) Costs of pulpit supply during the Moderator's absence on moderatorial duty;
 - (iv) An honorarium of \$1,500 per annum.
- (b) Declare that when the Moderator is invited to special congregational and institutional functions the parties concerned should, as a general rule, meet all relevant moderatorial expenses.
- (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve any necessary additional

- expenditure in respect of the Moderator.
- (5) (a) Until further notice pay for motel accommodation during the course of the Assembly for the Moderator, Clerks and Business Convener;
- (b) Declare that, until further notice, other Commissioners to the Assembly will be allocated accommodation with billets, where these are offered, and that those who find this unacceptable will be responsible for their own accommodation.
- (c) Pay the cost of motel accommodation up to \$50.00 per night per person, for a maximum of 4 nights, for commissioners to the Assembly who requested billets but for whom billets were not available.
- (6) Approve the reimbursement of the travelling expenses incurred by members of committees attending committee meetings on the same basis as determined for meetings of the General Assembly of Australia, that is, as per (2) above, with incidental expenses as determined by each committee.
- (7) (a) Approve the following amounts as "maximum allocations" to the Committee listed for the period 1 January, 1998 to 31 December, 2000 in order to take up deficiencies that cannot be financed from within their own resources:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Centenary | 300 |
| Christian Education | Nil |
| Church and Nation | 3,000 |
| Code | 5,000 |
| College | 19,000 |
| Defence Forces | 2,000 |
| Public Worship & Aids to Devotion | 5,500 |
| Reception of Ministers | 2,000 |
| Relations with Other Churches | <u>1,000</u> |
| | <u>37,800</u> |
- (b) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve additional expenditure that may arise after consultation with any committee, reporting details to State Finance or equivalent committees.
- (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve payment of audit fees, office service charges and other necessary administrative expenses and include such costs with committee expenses to be recovered from State assemblies.
- (8) Request State assemblies when called upon to do so, to reimburse the Finance Committee without delay expenditure in connection with the holding of the 1997 General Assembly of Australia, the expenses of committees of the General Assembly of Australia, and expenditure of the Moderator in the proportion of commissioners as approved by the Thirty-Seventh General Assembly in 1979 (Min.95:6).
- (9) Request the Trustees to finance expenditure authorised by the Finance Committee, pending reimbursement by State Finance or equivalent committees.
- (10) Request all State assemblies to consider matters pertaining to the establishment of a unified Long Service Leave scheme as outlined in the report of the Finance Committee and to advise the Finance Committee, by 31 December, 1999, of their willingness to participate in a unified scheme.

39. National Journal: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the National Journal Committee (Min. 37).

Arising from the debate the Rev. D.A. Burke moved:

That the Assembly:

- (8) (a) Authorise the National Journal Committee to set terms and conditions for the appointment of an editor of the National Journal.
- (b) Empower the Commission of Assembly to appoint a new editor for the National Journal.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Clauses (10) to (11) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. R. van Delden moved:

That the Assembly:

Authorise the National Journal Committee to establish an internet (web) presence for the Presbyterian Church of Australia for use by all of its State assemblies, committees and charges, by:

- (a) selecting and registering an internet domain name;
- (b) establishing and maintaining a web site;
- (c) setting guidelines for its use; and
- (d) offering practical advice for those desiring to have pages included;

with authority to spend up to \$1,000 on this project, and with power to modify or cease the provision of this service should the Committee deem it necessary.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note the improved financial performance of the national magazine.
- (2) Thank Mr Alastair Matheson for his service to the Committee and the Church on the National Journal Committee over a period of 20 years, and Rev. Tom Cannon for his service and writing ministry during the triennium.
- (3) Thank the Editor and staff of the national magazine.
- (4) Commend to the Church's membership greater support of "Australian Presbyterian Life".
- (5) Note the return to the use of the name "Australian Presbyterian Life."
- (6) Reappoint the Rev. Robert Humphreys as Editor of the National Journal for a further twelve months on the present terms and conditions except that the appointment will be terminable by two months' notice from either party (BB. 1991 Min 180(3)).
- (7) Authorise the National Journal Committee to engage an editor on a casual basis when it receives advice that the resignation of the Rev. R. Humphreys will become effective.
- (8)
 - (a) Authorise the National Journal Committee to set the terms and conditions for the appointment of an editor of the National Journal.
 - (b) Empower the Commission of Assembly to appoint a new editor for the National Journal.
- (9) Approve a Communication Service fee of \$16,350 per annum during 1997-2001 to the National Journal Committee, such fee to be paid in equal instalments on 1 January and 1 July each year.
- (10) Approve the annual national magazine promotion month in the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (11) Authorise the National Journal Committee to establish an internet (web) presence for the Presbyterian Church of Australia for use by all of its State assemblies, committees and charges, by:
 - (a) selecting and registering an Internet domain name;
 - (b) establishing and maintaining a web site;
 - (c) setting guidelines for its use; and
 - (d) offering practical advice for those desiring to have pages included;with authority to spend up to \$1,000 on this project, and with power to modify or cease the provision of this service should the Committee deem it necessary.

40. Communication (vi): A communication was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania concerning church planting in Burnie, Tasmania.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 113).

41. Ad Hoc Committee on a National Superannuation Scheme: The report of the ad hoc Committee on a National Superannuation Scheme was laid on the table and received.

Dr. P.E. Lush submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Recommend that the superannuation funds in the States of Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales provide for 100% portability between these funds.
- (2) Thank and discharge the committee.

42. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 74 to 78 were laid on the table.

43. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 7 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.
PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

FOURTH SEDERUNT

44. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Tuesday 9 September, 1997, at 7 p.m. the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

45. Australian Presbyterian World Mission: The report of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee was laid on the table and received.

Dr. D. Pilgrim submitted the deliverance.

The following missionaries and returned missionaries Rev. I.K. Smith, K.T. Martin, R. Manton Miss J. Cutler, Mr. D. Cummings and Pastor Rossie Meake, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, addressed the Assembly.

The Rev. K.W. Morris led the Assembly in prayer for the work of missions.

Clauses (1) to (10) were approved.

Pursuant to notice Dr. D. Pilgrim moved:

That the Assembly:

Express its thanks to God for the three terms of service of the Rev. Ian and Mrs. Jenni Smith and family at Talua Ministry Training Centre, Vanuatu, for the two terms of service of the Rev. Ken and Mrs. Gillian Martin and family in Venda, South Africa, and for the shorter terms of service of Miss Norah Taylor as an English teacher at Talua, Miss Sue Poynter as an English teacher in Japan, and Mrs. Beryl Burke in the libraries at Talua and Bimbadeen Colleges.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Clause (11) was approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. Dr. R.S. Keith moved:

That the Assembly:

Urge the APWM to publish the "Missionary and Prayer Directory" at least every two years.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note the respective roles and job descriptions of the National Convener and the National Director as defined in the report.
- (2) Approve the title of National Director in place of National World Mission Coordinator.
- (3) Appoint the Rev. Robert Benn as National Director of APWM until the next session of the General Assembly on the existing terms and conditions, noting that a letter has been sent to all Presbyteries regarding the need for increased financial support for the Rev. Robert and Mrs. Laurel Benn.
- (4) Amend the regulations of the APWM to read as follows:

3.1 AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION COMMITTEE

1. There shall be a Committee of the General Assembly known as the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee.
2. The Committee shall consist of:
 - A Convener elected by the General Assembly
 - The Convener of each of the APWM State Committees
 - Additional representatives appointed by the APWM State Committees of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria (see Min. 124)
 - Seven members elected by the Assembly
 - The Assembly Officers, ex-officio
 - The National Director
3. Responsibilities of the Federal APWM Committee shall be:
 - Implementation of Article (VII) of the Articles of Agreement and any relevant decisions of the General Assembly.
 - Final acceptance of missionary candidates after interview and recommendation by the relevant State Committees;
 - Formal entry into partnership with Missionary Societies;
 - Implementation of the Assembly's mission policy;

- Control of mission work of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in a manner consistent with the Church's doctrine and practice;
 - Development of mission initiatives to which the Lord is calling;
 - Promotion of the spiritual and physical well-being of all Presbyterian missionaries in cooperation with State APWM Committees;
 - The raising of external funding for development aspects of the work of mission;
 - Attention to any other matter referred to the Committee by the Assembly;
 - The encouragement of State assemblies to enact and maintain, for their own committees on world missions, regulations which will complement those of the Federal Committee.
4. APWM State committees will be expected to:
- Promote the work of APWM;
 - Accept financial responsibility for supporting projects and personnel according to the policies of the Federal APWM Committee;
 - Undertake all appropriate matters relating to the State's candidates for mission service, and make recommendations for acceptance to the Federal APWM Committee;
 - Cooperate with the presbytery concerned in Commissioning Services;
 - Arrange home ministry assignments for the State's missionaries in consultation with the National Director and the Partner Societies;
 - Promote the physical and spiritual well-being of all Presbyterian missionaries in cooperation with the Federal APWM Committee.
- (5) Note that APWM has entered into formal relationships with the Hap Dong Presbyterian Church in South Korea, and is continuing discussions with the Kosin Church in South Korea and with the Presbyterian Church in Japan with a view to formal partnership.
- (6) Encourage APWM on behalf of the Assembly to enter into formal discussions with the Presbyterian Church in America whose mission arm is Mission to the World, and with the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Australia, with a view to closer cooperation in cross-cultural ministry.
- (7) Note that:
- (a) the General Assembly has given to APWM the responsibility "to enunciate and carry through the Assembly's policy in regard to the missionary service and outreach of the Church to peoples of other cultures and other countries";
 - (b) no financial allocation is made by the Assembly for this ministry;
 - (c) to support its ministry, the Committee is annually drawing down 20% of its general trust funds, which stood at \$108,862 at December, 1996.
 - (d) the total cost of this ministry approximates to \$2.5M per annum, the greater proportion of which comes from the membership of the PCA;
 - (e) the approximate cost of the Federal APWM Committee's "Partner Mission" ministry is \$350,000 per annum;
 - (f) the Federal APWM Committee requests approximately one third of its necessary revenue from the respective States on a pro rata basis, and this request is graciously subscribed to;
 - (g) for the last few years APWM's expenditure has exceeded its income by approximately \$50,000 per year, notwithstanding the response of the church to the "Meal for Mission" appeal;
 - (h) APWM has resolved that "100% finance will be raised for each Partner Church Missionary leaving for the first time or returning to their sphere of service; when possible APWM will consider contributing up to 25%";
 - (i) this still leaves the problem of those missionaries already in their sphere of service who do not have this level of support and who rely on APWM for their funds;
 - (j) the whole church is encouraged to take greater responsibility in the support

of the cross-cultural ministry programme so that existing missionaries will not have to be withdrawn from their service;

- (k) there are several people preparing for service as Partner Church Missionaries.
- (8) Request its commissioners to strongly encourage:
- (a) responsible support for the Church's cross cultural mission programme through the denomination;
 - (b) generous support for the annual "Meal for Mission" appeal which in 1997 is likely to contribute one sixth of the Federal APWM Committee's total financial obligations.
- (9) Approve "Partnership in Missions", the 1997 Policy Handbook of APWM.
- (10) Express its thanks to Dr Rex Burns for his eight years service as National Convener of APWM, and to Mrs Jessie Lu for over nine years service as Secretary of APWM and as a member of the Executive.
- (11) Express its thanks to God for the three terms of service of the Rev. Ian and Mrs. Jenni Smith and family at Talua Ministry Training Centre, Vanuatu, for the two terms of service of the Rev. Ken and Mrs. Gillian Martin and family in Venda, South Africa, and for the shorter terms of service of Miss Norah Taylor as an English teacher at Talua, Miss Sue Poynter as an English teacher in Japan, and Mrs. Beryl Burke in the libraries at Talua and Bimbadeen Colleges.
- (12) Note that Pastor Bill Camden died on 24 December, 1994, after a long illness, and give thanks to God for nearly 30 years of service to the Australian and Vanuatu Churches in pastoral, evangelistic and translation ministry.
- (13) Urge the APWM to publish the "Missionary and Prayer Directory" at least every two years.

46. Communication (v): A communication was received from the Presbytery of Penola concerning support for Australian Presbyterian World Mission.

47. Communication (ix): A communication was received from Australian Presbyterian World Mission concerning Petition (i).

48. Petition (i): A petition was received from the Queensland Standing Committee for World Evangelisation concerning Aboriginal Ministry.

The petitioner was called to the bar.

There appeared for the petitioner the Rev. J.W. Langbridge and Mr. J. Tucker.

Questions were asked of the petitioners.

The Rev. C.D. Balzer challenged the competence of the Petition.

The moderator ruled the Petition competent.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 73).

49. Presbyterian Inland Mission: The report of the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. J.J. Knapp submitted the deliverance.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 75).

50. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 79 to 83 were laid on the table.

51. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

FIFTH SEDERUNT

52. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Wednesday 10 September, 1997 at 9.30 a.m., the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

53. Business: The order of business for the fifth, sixth and seventh sederunts was approved.

54. Presbyterian Women's Association: The report of the Presbyterian Women's Association was laid on the table and received.

Mrs. M. Boase, retiring President; Mrs. F. Schinckel, President; Mrs. G. Burgess, Secretary; and Mrs. P. Grieve; Treasurer were presented to the Moderator and at his invitation Mesdames M. Boase and F. Schinckel addressed the House.

Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved:

That the Assembly:

Commend the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia on its report to the Assembly and thank God for the life, witness and contribution of P.W.A. members in our Church.

The motion was seconded and approved.

55. Overture (viii): An overture from seven members of the Assembly concerning an amendment to Standing Orders by the inclusion of provision for counter motions was taken up and received.

The Rev. B.M. Meller and Mr. S.J. Fraser stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

It was moved and seconded that the debate be adjourned.

The motion was disapproved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

(1) Add new Standing Orders 24A and 24B as follows:

Character of Motions:

24A Motions shall be considered as belonging to one of the following categories, and shall be dealt with as prescribed, namely:

- (a) the original motion,
- (b) counter-motions - being motions contradictory or negative of the original motion or of a substantial part of the original motion, and
- (c) amendments - being motions not substantially contradictory of the original motion or counter-motion, but for:
 - (i) leaving out certain words,
 - (ii) leaving out certain words in order to insert or add other words, or
 - (iii) inserting or adding certain words.

The Moderator shall be the judge of the character to which any motion shall be considered to belong, and shall rule accordingly.

Procedure for Voting on Motions:

24B After all amendments, if any, have been disposed of, the Moderator shall take a vote between all motions in Categories (a) and (b) of Standing Order 24A, and in doing so shall adopt the following procedure:

- (a) A vote shall be taken between all the motions in the order as determined by the Moderator, beginning at the first.
- (b) Each Commissioner may vote for one motion only.
- (c) If on the vote being taken, one motion has obtained a clear majority of votes, all the other motions shall fall.

- (d) If no motion has obtained a clear majority, the motion having the smallest number of votes shall be disregarded and a vote taken between the remaining motions.
 - (e) The same procedure shall continue until one motion receives a clear majority on a vote.
 - (f) The motion which has received a clear majority shall then be put by the Moderator to the Assembly, and shall be voted on "For" or "Against". If a majority vote for it, the motion shall become the judgement of the Assembly. If a majority vote against it the motion shall fall, and further procedure in the matter shall be as the Assembly may determine.
- (2) Amend Standing Order 43 by the addition of the following words after "original motion" in (c) - "except in any debate involving counter motions".
- The motion was seconded and approved.

56. Communication (iv): A communication was received from the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria stating that the Victorian Assembly had resolved to transmit Overture (i) concerning women in the eldership, to the 1997 General Assembly of Australia.

57. Ministry of Women: Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.A. Burke moved:
That the Assembly:

- (1) Establish an ad hoc committee to explore opportunities for a positive approach to the ministry of women in the church.
- (2) Appoint the committee as follows: Rt. Rev. Bruce Christian (Convener), Dr. Joan Asher, Mesdames Ngaire Moore, Evelyn Mill, Ms. S. Maddrell, Dr. Colin Gauld, Rev. Peter Barson, David Burke, Paul Cooper, Mike Wharton and Joy Bartholomew.

The motion was seconded.

It was moved and seconded that the debate be adjourned.

The motion was disapproved.

The motion of the Rev. D.A. Burke was approved.

58. Overture (ii): An overture from the session of the Scots Kirk Mosman, N.S.W., concerning the ordination of women to the ministry of Word and Sacraments was taken up and received.

Mr. B.J.G. Robertson and Miss I.A. Offord stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice Mr. J.C. Mackillop moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded.

It was moved and seconded that the debate be adjourned.

The motion was disapproved.

The motion to sustain the overture was disapproved.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the overture be dismissed.

The Rev. J.F. Bartholomew, N.S. Wilce, A.D. Lang, Dr. L.M. Robins, Mesdames P. Downey, J. Duke, Miss K. McQuarrie, Messrs. D.R. Brierley, A. Byleveld, J. Rooimans, J.H. Watson, J.C. Mackillop, R.D. Menzies, W.H. Conrow, R.W. Arstall, G. Drummond, C.D. Cutler, B.C. Evans, R. Brown and Dr. H. Clements recorded their dissent.

59. Question of the Eldership: Pursuant to notice the Rev. K.T. Martin moved:
That the Assembly:

Declare the ordination of women to the eldership to be a question of doctrine and government.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice Mr. S.H. Fraser moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete the words "a question of doctrine and government" and substitute therefore the following new words:

an issue of government. In making this declaration the Assembly notes that in terms of the historic distinction in the Westminster Documents of doctrine, government, discipline and form of worship as referred to in the preamble to the Basis of Union, the issue is not one of the doctrine of the Church as found in the Westminster Confession of Faith (read in the light of the Declaratory Statement), but of government of the Church as found in the Form of Presbyterian Church Government and which was relied upon by the Assembly in making its declaration on this issue in 1967. (Min. 131).

The amendment was seconded and approved.

The motion as amended was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

Declare the ordination of women to the eldership to be an issue of government. In making this declaration the Assembly notes that in terms of the historic distinction in the Westminster Documents of doctrine, government, discipline and form of worship as referred to in the preamble to the Basis of Union, the issue is not one of the doctrine of the Church as found in the Westminster Confession of Faith (read in the light of the Declaratory Statement), but of government of the Church as found in the Form of Presbyterian Church Government and which was relied upon by the Assembly in making its declaration on this issue in 1967. (Min. 131).

60. Variation of Business: Arising from the debate the Rev. P.A. Davidson moved:

That the Assembly:

Vary the order of business to allow N/M 71 and Overture (i) along with the attendant notices of motion to be taken immediately following the reception of deputationists in the sixth sederunt.

The motion was seconded and approved.

61. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 84 to 94 were laid on the table.

62. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.
PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.
BRUCE MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

SIXTH SEDERUNT

63. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Wednesday 10 September, 1997, at 2 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

64. Rev. H. de Waard: By resolution of the Assembly (Min. 9 (14)) the Rev. Dr. H. de Waard of the Reformed Ecumenical Council addressed the Assembly.

65. Committee on the Eldership: Pursuant to notice the Rev. C.D. Balzer moved: That the Assembly:
Appoint an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of the Rev. P.F. Cooper (Convener), P. Hastie, Dr. A. Harman, B. Christian, P. Barson and Dr. P. Lush, to re-examine the question of the doctrine of the eldership and report to the next meeting of the Assembly.
The motion was seconded and disapproved.

66. Overture (i): An overture from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria concerning women in the eldership was taken up.
The competence of the overture was challenged.
The Moderator ruled the overture incompetent.
Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.
The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

67. Elders as Church Governors: Pursuant to notice Mr. S.H. Fraser moved: That the Assembly:
(1) Acknowledge that it has in the past proceeded on the basis that the issue of admission of women to the eldership is a matter of Church government which is the responsibility of State assemblies.
(2) Declare that it is competent for a State assembly, by its own rules and regulations, to restrict admission to the eldership to men.
The debate was adjourned (Min. 121).

68. Minutes: The minutes of the first, second and third sederunts were laid on the table and confirmed.

69. Communication (viii): A communication was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W. concerning studies at Moore Theological College.

70. College: The report of the College Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Approve the continued use of Moore Theological College until the next General Assembly of Australia as a venue for satisfying part of the course requirements for the training of candidates for the ministry, and in addition to credit for B.Th. subjects approve the granting of credits for the further subjects listed in the committee's report.
- (2) Alter the College Committee regulations by the addition of a sub-clause to Regulation 4 as follows:
shall demonstrate competence in English.
- (3) Authorise the College Committee to make representations to both the Mission to the World of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Australia seeking a conference of the three bodies to discuss:

- (a) the general situation with respect to reformed theological, ministerial and missionary education in Australia;
 - (b) the most efficient and strategic use of the resources available for the progress of reformed theological, ministerial and missionary education in Australia;
 - (c) possible co-operation between the three participating bodies in promoting the reformed faith and reformed theological, ministerial and missionary education in Australia in the 21st century;
- and report with recommendation to the next GAA.
- (4) Authorise the use of the Perth Consortium (consisting of the Westminster Theological College in Perth and the Perth Centre for Applied Christian Studies) for the training of candidates for the Ministry from Western Australia until the next meeting of the Assembly, subject to:
 - (a) the approval of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Western Australia;
 - (b) the annual approval of a full curriculum for candidates for the ministry by the College Committee.
 - (5) Authorise the College Committee to approve co-operating or consortium relationships between the Queensland Theological Hall and other Theological Colleges of Reformed confession and Presbyterian conviction in Queensland until the next meeting of the Assembly, such approval to be subject to:
 - (a) the College Committee's satisfaction that the confessional and academic standards of the Presbyterian Church of Australia will be maintained; and
 - (b) the agreement of the Queensland Assembly.

71. Overture (iv): An overture from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia concerning an investigation of theological education was taken up and received.

The Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve and the Rev. J.J.T. Campbell stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.J.T. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.J.T. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Appoint a special committee of the Assembly consisting of three representatives of the General Assembly (to include qualified tertiary educators or ministers) and three nominees of the College Committee to investigate and report to the General Assembly with recommendations on:

- (a) the feasibility, in the medium term, of integrating the three existing theological halls into one institution with three or more campuses, so that academic staff could employ their gifts and training to serve a wider student body.
- (b) The extent to which distance education methods could be used for the substantial part of their training, and the amount of time which would need to be spent on campus, bearing in mind the special aims and requirements for training for the ministry of the Word.
- (c) The extent to which use could be made of other existing institutions to provide part of the required training.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete all words between "Assembly" and "(a)" and insert the following "Instruct the College Committee (with the assistance of co-opted qualified tertiary educators) to investigate and report to the next General Assembly with recommendations on:"

The amendment was seconded and approved.

The motion as amended was approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.J.T. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Invite courts, committees and members of the Church to make submissions on these matters to the College Committee through its Convener.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The approved resolutions are as follow:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Instruct the College Committee (with the assistance of co-opted qualified tertiary educators) to investigate and report to the next General Assembly with recommendations on:
 - (a) The feasibility, in the medium term, of integrating the three existing theological halls into one institution with three or more campuses, so that academic staff could employ their gifts and training to serve a wider student body;
 - (b) The extent to which distance education methods could be used for the substantial part of their training, and the amount of time which would need to be spent on campus, bearing in mind the special aims and requirements of training for the ministry of the Word.
 - (c) The extent to which use could be made of other existing institutions to provide part of the required training.
- (2) Invite courts, committees and members of the Church to make submissions on these matters to the College Committee through its Convener.

72. Ad Hoc Committee on Communications to the General Assembly: The report of the ad hoc Committee on communications to the General Assembly was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. R.A. Humphreys submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Request the Code Committee of the General Assembly of Australia to prepare a booklet giving a summary of Presbyterian Church of Australia polity and procedures in simple English and where possible in the major non-English languages used in congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (particularly Korean, Chinese and Samoan).
- (2) Thank and discharge the ad hoc Committee.

73. Petition (i): The Assembly resumed consideration of Petition (i) (Min. 48).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly grant the prayer of the Petition.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly:

Request Australian Presbyterian World Mission to establish a sub-committee with the following responsibilities:

- (a) Formulate a national policy on Aboriginal issues.
- (b) Develop a national strategy for ministry among Aboriginal people.
- (c) Co-ordinate and assist presbyteries, congregations and other relevant organisations already involved in Aboriginal ministry.
- (d) Encourage and develop new work among the Aboriginal people.
- (e) Encourage and develop the training of suitable Aboriginal people for Christian ministry.
- (f) Liaise with other evangelical organisations involved in Aboriginal ministries including indigenous organisations.
- (g) Promote awareness of Aboriginal needs in local congregations.
- (h) Recruit, send and encourage support for Aboriginal ministry.

The motion was seconded.

Arising from the debate the Rev. R.A. Humphreys moved as an amendment.

That the Assembly:

Add to Clause (a) the words "and Torres Strait Islander" between "Aboriginal" and "issues".

The amendment was seconded.

By leave of the House Mr. A.L. Crawford moved as an amendment to the amendment that clause (a) be amended by the addition of the words "and Torres Strait Islander issues" after the words "Aboriginal issues".

The amendment to the amendment was seconded and approved.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 97).

74. Variation of Business: The Business Convener moved:

That the Assembly:

Vary the order of business for the seventh sederunt in order to take the report of the Church and Nation Committee in that sederunt.

The motion was seconded and approved.

75. Presbyterian Inland Mission: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee. (Min. 49)

The debate was adjourned. (Min. 81)

76. Ballot: A ballot was held for the following committees: Presbyterian Inland Mission (Victoria); Code (Queensland); Reception of Ministers; Presbyterian Inland Mission (Queensland); Relations with Other Churches (S.A.); Relations with Other Churches (W.A.); A.P.W.M.; Finance; National Journal; Relations with Other Churches (Queensland) and Presbyterian Inland Mission (W.A.).

77. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 95 to 99 were laid on the table.

78. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 7 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

SEVENTH SEDERUNT

79. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Wednesday 10 September, 1997, at 7 p.m., the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

80. Church and Nation: The report of the Church and Nation Committee and an addendum to the report was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. P.C. Moore submitted the deliverance.

By leave of the House in terms of Standing Order 20B, Clause (1) was moved, seconded and approved

Clause (2) to (3) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. G.K. Kettmiss moved:

That the Assembly:

Affirm that reconciliation between all people can only come about when they embrace the love and grace of Christ.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Clause (4) was approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P.C. Moore moved:

That the Assembly:

In relation to mission to aboriginal people and the National Enquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families ("Bringing Them Home" (BTH)):

- (a) Recognise with gratitude to God the good, appropriate, culturally sensitive, linguistic, God honouring and enduring work done by the Church and her missionaries for the Aboriginal people.
- (b) Remain committed to serving the indigenous people of Australia and recommit itself through its committees to sustained promotion of ministry to Aboriginal people.
- (c) Note that the report (BTH) describes a sinful racist policy of various governments whereby indigenous children were separated from their parents on the grounds that the parents or one of them was an indigenous person.
- (d) Recognise that in relation to that government policy it would have been exceedingly difficult for the church to know the full situation over an extended period covering various administrations.
- (e) While it promoted the maintenance of Aboriginal family structures, lobbied the government for Aboriginal welfare and protested against the abuses of Aboriginal people, yet, to the extent that it failed to understand and speak out against that sinful government policy and, it seems, at times a government policy of neglect toward traditional Aborigines, the church committed a sin of omission and unreservedly apologises to all affected.
- (f) Request APWM and PIM to cooperate in an investigation of the Church's involvement in the said separation policy and an assessment of harm done, to report to the next General Assembly of Australia with recommendations as to how the Assembly can further put right any harm it has unintentionally caused.
- (g) In relation to BTH recommendations 38a, 38b, 39, 40a, 41, (which relate to making available archival material, missions on Aboriginal lands, and the provision of counselling services) request its committees and State assemblies to:
 - (a) provide any information it may have relating to the forced separation of children from their parents to appropriate government departments.
 - (b) identify any church mission stations which may be rightfully returned to the appropriate land council and, upon negotiation with the land council, make a recommendation to the next General Assembly of Australia.
- (h) recognise that its Church and Nation Committee will, upon due thought, prayer and consultation, make further statements relating to Aboriginal issues as appropriate.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The following recorded their dissent:

To the whole motion: Rev. I.H. Barker, G.W. Eastwell, J.B. Stewart, K.T. Martin, P.W. Swinn, Mrs. M.E. Bristow, Messrs. P. Betts, F. Goodson, N. Taylor, S.V. Petherick, J. Watson.

To Clause (c): Mr. R.W. Farr.

To Clauses (c) and (e): Messrs. W.H. Conrow, J.H. McClenahan.

Clauses (c), (e) and (f): Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner, Rev. J.K. Brown, and Mr. G. Bell.

Clauses (e) and (f): Messrs. A.L. Crawford, B. Redpath, D.H. Bradley, M.C. Beveridge, B. Layt, D. Lewis, Rev. L. Hall, J.F. Bartholomew.

Clause (f): Rev. I.H. Touzel, G. Kettniss.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the Church and Nation Committee to study the subject of the use and tolerance of blasphemous and profane language to recommend a national strategy to combat this growing phenomenon.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P.F. Cooper moved:

That the Assembly:

Commend "Breaking the Silence", a document approved by the General Assembly of N.S.W., which deals with policy and procedures for protecting and dealing with sexual abuse within the church.

The motion was seconded and approved.

By leave of the House, the Rev. M. de Pyle moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the Moderator-General to communicate to the Prime Minister and the Federal Parliament the call of the church for them to energetically pursue uniform legislation throughout the Commonwealth that removes from legal distribution all materials of a violent and pornographic nature.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Amend the regulations of the Church and Nation Committee by the insertion of a new clause (2) to read:
 - 2A. The Committee shall consist of the Conveners elected by all of the State General Assemblies to their Church and Nation Committee or equivalent, or in the absence of a Church and Nation Committee or equivalent, a member elected by the State General Assembly, or where the elected Convener of the State Committee is unable to fulfil duties as a member of the Federal Committee, a member elected by the State Assembly; together with the officers of the General Assembly of Australia.
 - 2B. The Convener shall be elected by the General Assembly of Australia.
- (2) Request the Moderator-General to communicate to the Prime Minister, The Hon. John Howard, M.P. and to the Federal Parliament the appreciation of the church in achieving bipartisan support for the enactment of uniform gun controls in the aftermath of the Port Arthur Massacre.
- (3) Acknowledge to the indigenous people of Australia and to Almighty God:
 - (a) that under the common law in force in Australia as recognised by the High Court in the "Mabo" case, indigenous Australians have rightful entitlements ("Native Title") to land to which they maintain an appropriate connection, where it has not been granted to competing owners;
 - (b) that pastoral leases do not always exclude the continuance of Native Title, in each case depending on the terms of the lease and occupation thereunder;
 - (c) that where a remnant of Native Title may legitimately be recognised after recognition and enforcement of a pastoral lease, indigenous people are justly entitled to maintain any such Native Title rights with respect to that land;
 - (d) that if Australian or other governments consider that pastoralists or others

- require a broadening of their rights under any pastoral lease or other form of land "title" or other form of "right of use", the indigenous title holders (if any) are properly entitled to compensation for their consequent loss of rights, and such compensation ought to be on just terms;
- (e) that the Australian government ought to set policy to prevent any further deprivation of indigenous people with respect to their existing entitlements to land.
- (4) Affirm that reconciliation between all people can only come about when they embrace the love and grace of Christ.
- (5) Write to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Australian Democrats and the Chairman of A.T.S.I.C. setting forth its views as contained in clauses (3) and (4).
- (6) In relation to mission to aboriginal people and the National Enquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families ("Bringing Them Home" (BTH)):"
- (a) Recognise with gratitude to God the good, appropriate, culturally sensitive, linguistic, God honouring and enduring work done by the Church and her missionaries for the Aboriginal people.
- (b) Remain committed to serving the indigenous people of Australia and recommit itself through its committees to sustained promotion of ministry to Aboriginal people.
- (c) Note that the report (BTH) describes a sinful racist policy of various governments whereby indigenous children were separated from their parents on the grounds that the parents or one of them was an indigenous person.
- (d) Recognise that in relation to that government policy it would have been exceedingly difficult for the church to know the full situation over an extended period covering various administrations.
- (e) While it promoted the maintenance of Aboriginal family structures, lobbied the government for Aboriginal welfare and protested against the abuses of Aboriginal people, yet, to the extent that it failed to understand and speak out against that sinful government policy and, it seems, at times a government policy of neglect toward traditional Aborigines, the church committed a sin of omission and unreservedly apologises to all affected.
- (f) Request APWM and PIM to cooperate in an investigation of the Church's involvement in the said separation policy and an assessment of harm done, to report to the next GA of A with recommendations as to how the Assembly can further put right any harm it has unintentionally caused.
- (g) In relation to BTH recommendations 38a, 38b, 39, 40a, 41, (which relate to making available archival material, missions on Aboriginal lands, and the provision of counselling services) the Assembly request its committees and State assemblies to:
- (i) provide any information it may have relating to the forced separation of children from their parents to appropriate government departments.
- (ii) identify any church mission stations which may be rightfully returned to the appropriate land council and upon negotiation with the land council make a recommendation to the next GA of A.
- (h) that the Assembly recognise that its Church and Nation Committee will, upon due thought, prayer and consultation make further statements relating to Aboriginal issues as appropriate.
- (7) Request the Church and Nation Committee to study the subject of the use and tolerance of blasphemous and profane language to recommend a national strategy to combat this growing phenomenon.
- (8) Commend "Breaking the Silence", a document approved by the General Assembly of New South Wales, which deals with policy and procedures for protecting and dealing with sexual abuse within the church.
- (9) Request the Moderator General to communicate to the Prime Minister and the

Federal Parliament the call of the Church for them to energetically pursue uniform legislation throughout the Commonwealth that removes from legal distribution all materials of a violent and pornographic nature.

81. Presbyterian Inland Mission: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee (Min. 75).

Clauses (1) to (4)(a) were approved.

Clause (4)(b) was moved and seconded.

Pursuant to notice, Rev. S.M. Bonnington moved, as an amendment:

That the Assembly

Amend the Regulations of the PIM Committee, section 3.12.4, pertaining to the appointment of the Superintendent, by changing "25 per cent" to "50 per cent" commencing 1 January, 1998.

The amendment was approved.

The amended motion was approved.

Clauses (4)(c) to (6) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. R.S. Duncanson moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend Regulation 3 of the regulations of the Presbyterian Inland Mission by:

- (a) Deleting the words "sixteen (16)" and inserting the words "seventeen (17)".
- (b) Adding the words "Western Australia" to line 5 so that it would read - "two (2) each from New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia".
- (c) Delete the words "Western Australia" from line 6 so that it would read - "and one each from Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory".

The Previous Question on the motion of the Rev. R.S. Duncanson was moved, seconded and approved.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 96).

82. Ballot: The report of the Ballot Committee was laid on the table and received.

Dr. P.E. Lush submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Confirm the following elections:

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

Members: Rev. J. Elliott, C.J. Letcher, Miss M. Geddes, Rev. Dr. D.C. Mitchell,
Mr. I. Campbell, Rev. L. Pearce, P. Nellies.

Convener: Dr. D. Pilgrim

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Members:

N.S.W. Mr. P. Boggs, Rev. D.A. Burke, Mr. D. Davies

Qld. Rev. R.C. Clark, Mr. J. Mansfield

S.A. Rev. J.J.T. Campbell

Tas. Rev. S. Nicholson

Vic. Rev. C.R. Thomas, A. Venn

W.A. Rev. S.M. Bonnington

Convener: Rev. D.A. Burke

CODE

Members:

N.S.W. Rev. S. Coulton, B. Gorton, P.W. Hastie

Qld. Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner, Rev. G.J. Nicholson, L. Hall.

S.A. Mr. R.W. Arstall

Tas. Rev. Dr. D.C. Mitchell

Vic. Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, Rev. I.H. Touzel, J.P. Wilson

W.A. Rev. J. Nocher

DEFENCE FORCES CHAPLAINCY

Members: Rev. G.J. Abbas, K. Bell, P.A. Davidson, S.L. de Plater, Very Rev. Prof. A. Harman, Rev. Dr. R. Keith, Rev. A.D. Lang, J.A. Macintyre, Mr. J.C. Mackillop, Very Rev. A.C. Stubs, Rev. Dr. S.P. Swinn.

FINANCE

Members: Messrs. P.A. Burke, K.P. Mar, Rev. P.F. Cooper, Mr. D.R. Brierley
Convener: Mr. J. Mill

NATIONAL JOURNAL

Members: Rev. R. Benn, S.M. Bonnington, P.W. Hastie, M. Wharton, S. Lindsay, Dr. A. Bird, Rev. G. Kettniss, J. Ellis, Mr. B. Redpath.
Convener: Rev. R. Benn

PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

Members:
Qld. Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner, Rev. R.C. Clark, Messrs: R. Pilkington, G. Dunkley, Rev. A. MacNicol, Mrs. A. Petherick, Messrs. R. Whiting, B.T. Scott.
N.S.W. Rev. P. Beringer, Mr. P.A. Burke
N.T. Dr. L.H. Greenwood
S.A. Rev. R.M. Waterhouse
Tas. Mr. J.A.B. Finlay
Vic. Rev. Dr. R. Mathews, M. de Pyle
W.A. Rev. S.M. Bonnington
Convener: Rev. J.J. Knapp

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND AIDS TO DEVOTION

Members:
N.S.W. Rev. S.A. Andrews, C.D. Balzer, P.F. Cooper, Prin. J.A. Davies, P.W. Hastie
Qld. Rev. R. Van Delden
S.A. Rev. J.J.T. Campbell
Tas. Rev. P.D. Mercer
Vic. Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, Rev. R. Humphreys, M. Wharton
W.A. Rev. K.W. Morris
Convener: Rev. P.F. Cooper

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS

Ministers: Rev. C.D. Balzer, D.J. Innes, B. Fraser, Rt. Rev. M.S. Grieve, Rev. G.K. Kettniss.
Elders: Messrs. W. McLaren, J. Searle, N. Taylor, A.D. Turner, Dr. A. Vaughan
Convener: Rev. C.D. Balzer

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Members:
N.S.W. Rev. D.A. Burke, J. Webster
Qld. Rev. Prof. I. McIver, R. van Delden
S.A. Rev. J.J.T. Campbell, W. Zurrer
Tas. Rev. P. Mercer, Mr. A.D. Turner
Vic. Mr. W. Lawrence, Rev. Prof. D.J. Milne
W.A. Rev. S.M. Bonnington, K. Morris
Convener: Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Members: Rev. D.A. Burke, P.F. Cooper, B. Gorton, Mr. B.P. Harner, Rev. G. Kettniss, Mr. C. Langford, Rev. Dr. P.G. Logan, Rev. B. Meller, Rev. Dr. D.C. Mitchell.

- (2) Authorise the General Secretary to destroy the ballot papers.
- (3) Thank and discharge the Committee.

83. Notices of Motion: Notice of Motion 100 was laid on the table.

84. **Adjournment:** Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

EIGHTH SEDERUNT

85. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Thursday 11 September, 1997, at 9.30 a.m., the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

86. Business: The order of business for the eighth, ninth and tenth sederunts was approved.

87. Private Sitting: The Assembly sat in private.

88. Suspension of Standing Orders: It was moved and seconded that sufficient of the Standing Orders be suspended to allow questions to be asked about individual applicants when their application is being considered.
The motion was approved.

89. Reception of Ministers: The report of the Reception of Ministers Committee and addenda to the report was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. C.D. Balzer submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (3) and (5) to (6) were approved.

Clauses (4), (7) to (9) and the first part of clause (14) were fallen from.

Clauses (10) to (12) were approved.

Clause (13) was disapproved.

The Rev. C.D. Balzer moved:

That the Assembly:

Not receive the Rev. Andre Van Oudtshoorn as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Clauses (14) to (20) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the regulations of the Reception of Ministers Committee by adding, at the end of clause 5, a new sentence to read as follows:

"Applications received by the Committee within two months of the next meeting of the General Assembly may be deferred by the Committee for consideration by the succeeding Assembly."

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note that the Rev. Peter HILL, Scott KROEGER, and Andrew WILLIAMSON have been received as ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Clause 12 of the Regulations.
- (2) Note that the Rev. Peter BARCLAY, Girgis GIRGIS, Fayek ISKANDER, Jung Tae KIM, Martin LEVINE, Joe MOCK, Man Kyoung PARK, Henry PENNINGS and Darryl THATCHER have completed all requirements and have signed the Formula.
- (3) Note that the Rev. Jung Hyun SHIM has completed all study requirements but has not received a call or an appointment and therefore has not signed the Formula.
- (4) Terminate the application of the Rev. Christo Heiberg.
- (5) Note that the Rev. Hamdy AWAD has been received as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Clause 12 of the Regulations.
- (6) Receive the Rev. Ki Seok PARK as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his completing the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when the study is completed and when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or a full-time appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by

the General Assembly, a State assembly, or a committee or board thereof and consequently signs the Formula.

- (7) Receive the Rev. Alan PERRIE as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his completing the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when the study is completed and he thereafter signs the Formula.
- (8) Receive the Rev. Cor VANDERHORN as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his completing the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when the study is completed and he thereafter signs the Formula.
- (9) Not receive the Rev. Andre VAN OUDTSHOORN as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (10) Not receive the Rev. Danie MALAN as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (11) Terminate the applications of the Rev. Jeung Oh JOO, Chang Jin KIM, Tae Hyun KIM, Kang Wan KO, and Kwang Soo LEE.
- (12) Amend the regulations of the Reception of Ministers Committee so that clauses 12, 17 and 18 will read as follows:
 - 12. Minister Under Call:** If an applicant is:
 - (a) a minister of another presbyterian church,
and
 - (b) under call to a congregation of the Church, or under a full-time appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or made by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a committee or board thereof the decision to approve the application may be made by the Committee, which approval may be subject to condition for further study if prescribed by the College Committee. The Committee shall report any such approvals to the General Assembly.
 - 17. Australian Residency:** When an applicant has neither Australian citizenship nor permanent residency, any decision by the General Assembly to approve such an application will only take effect when the applicant receives and accepts either:
 - (a) a call to a congregation of the Church, or
 - (b) a full-time appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a committee or board thereofand subsequently signs the Formula.
 - 18. Distance Education:** If an applicant receives and accepts either:
 - (a) a call from a congregation of the Church, or
 - (b) a full-time appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a committee or board thereof the Committee may approve that any studies required of the applicant be completed in whole or in part by distance education methods.
- (13) Note that the Rev. John GRAHAM has been received as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Clause 12 of the Regulations.
- (14) Receive the Rev. Stephen WARWICK as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his completing the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when the study is completed and he thereafter signs the Formula.
- (15) Receive the Rev. Neil BENFELL as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his completing the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when the study is completed and he thereafter signs the Formula.
- (16) Receive the Rev. Won Hyoung MOON as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to his demonstrating his competence in English and his completing

the study determined by the College Committee, the decision to take effect when English competence is demonstrated, the study is completed and when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or a full-time appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a state assembly, or a committee or board thereof and consequently signs the Formula.

- (17) Amend the regulations of the Reception of Ministers Committee by adding, at the end of clause 5, a new sentence to read as follows:
"Applications received by the Committee within two months of the next meeting of the General Assembly may be deferred by the Committee for consideration by the succeeding Assembly."

90. Open Court: The Assembly resumed in open court.

91. Ad Hoc Committee on Diaconal Ministry: The report of the ad hoc Committee on Diaconal Ministry was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr. P.E. Barnes submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Affirm that:
- (a) the diaconate is an office of mercy, with responsibilities different from those of the eldership or a Committee of Management.
 - (b) the diaconate is to be concerned firstly with the poor and needy within the local body of believers, then with believers further abroad, and finally with the temporal welfare of all humanity according to established Biblical guidelines.
 - (c) service in the diaconate is open to both men and women.
 - (d) there is a need for some training for all deacons.
- (2) Recommend to State assemblies that they endeavour to establish diaconal ministry in all congregations under their jurisdiction, with regulations as nearly as possible the same in all States.
- (3) Commend the following draft regulations for adoption by State assemblies:
- (a) **Diaconal Ministry.** Sessions may establish diaconal ministries in the congregations under their care by the formation of Deacons' Courts.
 - (b) **Duties of Deacons.** Deacons shall be responsible to promote the material well-being of believers in the local community, believers further afield, and people in the community at large as resources permit. In fulfilling this duty, deacons shall perform a ministry distinct from that of the session or the committee of management.
 - (c) **Qualifications.** Deacons must be communicant members of the congregation which they are to serve, have attained the age of 21 years, have a good reputation and uphold the worship of God.
 - (d) **Supervision.** In the exercise of their duties, deacons shall be subject to the supervision and direction of the Session. The Session shall fix the number of deacons to be appointed, determine the manner of their election and the suitability of those elected, receive any resignation of a deacon or remove a deacon from office should that deacon renounce the responsibilities of the office, become mentally unsound, or breach the qualifications of a deacon.
 - (e) **Election of Deacons.** Deacons are elected by the communicants and adherents of a congregation at the annual meeting or at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.
 - (f) **Installation.** Deacons are introduced to their office by prayer during corporate worship.
 - (g) **Tenure of Office.** Deacons shall hold office for three years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election. On joining another congregation, a deacon is not entitled to recognition as a deacon until admitted to the office in the

usual way.

- (h) **Organisation.** Deacons shall be formed into a Deacons' Court, of which the minister shall be Chairman. Should the minister be absent or decline to chair a meeting, the deacons shall elect one of their number to serve as Chairman in any meeting of the Deacons' Court.
- (i) **Finance.** Financial provision shall be made by the Committee of Management for the funding of a Deacons' Court.

(4) Thank and discharge the committee.

Dr. H. Clements recorded her dissent for the following reasons:

The resolutions passed by the Assembly and recommended to State assemblies do not:

- (1) Disclose that they undermine the present regulations for the order of Deaconesses in the Church and may undermine the employment of present Deaconesses particularly in areas outside a local parish such as chaplains.
- (2) The recommended regulations are contrary to existing provisions at N.S.W. State level and therefore undermine concepts accepted at N.S.W. and Federal level that the diaconate is for life and deacons should answer set questions and in N.S.W. sign the Formula (N.S.W. Code 2.02).

92. Public Worship and Aids to Devotion: The report of the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. P.F. Cooper submitted the deliverance.

Clause (1) was moved and seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.R. Schwarz moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend "The Purpose" (p. 31) which reads: "To set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends" so that it will read as follows: "To set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends as an expression of the purity of worship practised in this Church."

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. H. Pennings moved:

That the Assembly:

Delete the words "through the faith of the parents" on page 33 and replace them with "through God's promise to believing parents", so that the new sentence will read, "In receiving this sacrament we acknowledge that, through God's promise to believing parents, this child is a part of the family of God."

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.R. Schwarz moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the paragraph on p. 33 beginning with "Because the practice of infant baptism rests ..."

to read as follows: "The practice of infant baptism rests in God's covenant of grace with Abraham, the father of all who believe as an everlasting covenant. The sign of this covenant in the New Testament is water, signifying the blood of Jesus Christ who is our righteousness and redemption. God requires personal faith in Jesus Christ on the part of the parents, therefore it is necessary for those presenting their children for baptism to answer certain questions."

The amendment was seconded.

The Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved on the amendment of the Rev. D.R. Schwarz.

The debate was adjourned. (Min. 95).

93. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

NINTH SEDERUNT

94. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Thursday 11 September, 1997, at 2.00 p.m., the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

95. Public Worship and Aids to Devotion: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion (Min. 92).

Pursuant to notice, Mr W. Vandenberg moved:

That the Assembly:

Add to the questions to be asked of parents of children to be baptised (W.B. pp. 33, 35), and of adults to be baptised (W.B. pp. 36-37) and of persons making public professions of faith (W.B. pp. 39-40) and of communicants from other churches (W.B. p. 42) the first question that is asked of licentiates, ministers and elders, i.e. "Do you believe the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only rule of faith and practice?"

The amendment was seconded.

The Previous Question was moved, seconded and disapproved.

The amendment was disapproved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.R. Schwarz moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the question: "Do you promise to give a God-honouring proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?" to read as follows: "Do you promise to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength and to give a God-honouring proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?"

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice Mr. R.G. Williams moved:

That the Assembly:

Remove the sentence "The Minister shall submit the names of those for baptism to the Session for admission to church membership" where it appears after the heading "An alternative Order of Baptism and Admission to Communicant Membership for Adults".

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.J.T. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Add the following words at the end of the consecration prayer in the Lord's Supper - First Order:

Gracious Lord, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, grant us now Your gracious presence and the effective working of Your Spirit in us; and so sanctify these elements of bread and wine, and bless this Your ordinance to us that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ crucified for us, and so feed upon Him that He may be one with us and we one with Him and we may live to the glory of Your Holy Name.

The amendment was seconded and disapproved.

Pursuant to notice Mr. W. Vandenberg moved:

That the Assembly:

Correct the inconsistency between the vow made by the bridegroom and the bride (W.B. p. 52) and the statement made by the minister after the exchange of rings (W.B. p. 53), by appending to the vow, "from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until God separates you by death."

The amendment was seconded and disapproved.

By leave of the House the Rev. P.F. Cooper moved, as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Substitute the words "Baptism of Infants" instead of "Infant Baptism" wherever appearing.

The amendment was seconded and approved.

Clause (1) as amended was approved.

The Rev. J.J.T. Campbell recorded his dissent on the grounds that the First Order of the Lord's Supper is defective by the measure of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 29, Section 3.

It was moved and seconded.

That the Assembly:

Note that, at the request of the Moderator, the Law Agent (speaking for the Law Officers), advised the Assembly that the resolution approved by this Assembly and stating that the purpose of "Worship" is to "set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends", does not constitute a mandatory declaration by the General Assembly pursuant to its powers in respect of worship under Article IV of the Articles of Agreement, but is in the nature of a recommendation which is not binding on the Church and its office-bearers. The motion was approved.

Clauses (2) to (3) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P.F. Cooper moved:

That the Assembly:

Authorise the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee to edit and approve the final form of the Commissioning and Decommissioning Services for Missionaries for inclusion in "Worship".

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Grant approval for "Worship", as contained in the Committee's report, to be the book of common order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia subject to the following amendments:
 - (a) Amend the line reading: "To set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends" to read as follows: "To set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends as an expression of the purity of worship practised in this Church."
 - (b) Delete the words "through the faith of the parents" on page 33 and replace them with "through God's promise to believing parents", so that the new sentence will read, "In receiving this sacrament we acknowledge that, through God's promise to believing parents, this child is a part of the family of God."
 - (c) Amend the question: "Do you promise to give a God-honouring proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?" to read as follows: "Do you promise to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength and to give a God-honouring proportion of your time, talents and money for the Church's work in the world?"
 - (d) Remove the sentence "The Minister shall submit the names of those for baptism to the Session for admission to church membership" where it appears after the heading "An alternative Order of Baptism and Admission to Communicant Membership for Adults".
 - (e) Substitute the words "baptism of infants" instead of "infant baptism" wherever appearing.
- (2) Note that, at the request of the Moderator, the Law Agent (speaking for the Law Officers), advised the Assembly that the resolution approved by this Assembly and stating that the purpose of "Worship" is to "set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends", does not constitute a mandatory declaration by the General Assembly pursuant to its powers in respect of worship under Article IV of the Articles of Agreement, but is in the nature of a recommendation which is not binding on the Church and its office-bearers.
- (3) Authorise the publication to be called "Worship - the Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia."
- (4) Withdraw from membership of the Australian Hymn Book Company and Committee.
- (5) Authorise the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee to edit and approve

the final form of the Commissioning and Decommissioning Services for Missionaries for inclusion in "Worship".

96. Presbyterian Inland Mission: The Assembly resumed consideration of the report of the Presbyterian Inland Mission (Min. 81).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. S.M. Bonnington moved:

That the Assembly:

Instruct the full committee to meet at least twice between General Assemblies, at least once between assemblies, and on the opening day of the next General Assembly.

The motion was seconded.

The Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) (a) Express appreciation to the Trustees of the General Assembly and the Law Officers, Mr. Garry Downes, QC and Mr. Simon Fraser, B.A., LL.M. (Hons.), for their wise counsel and dedicated service rendered on behalf of the PIM.
- (b) Express appreciation to members and organisations within the Church who have made donations to the PIM Committee and prayerfully request members of the church to consider making financial donations to the Mission as part of their on-going commitment.
- (c) Express appreciation and commend to the prayers of the Church the PIM Patrol Ministry Sub-Committee in Darwin under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Andrews.
- (d) Express sincere appreciation to the Rev. R. Taylor and C.R. Thomas for their service on the Committee, and to the Rev. D.A. Burke for his many years of service as a NSW representative and wish him God's blessing as he commences further post-graduate study.
- (2) Commend to the prayers of the Church the following padres and their families Pastor Ross Brinkman, Rev. Alan Clarkson, Robert Duncanson, Pastor Ron Lyons, Rev. Laurie Peake, Pastor Jeff Parry, Bill Gray, Rev. Terry Sadler and Rudi Schwartz.
- (3) Note that Darwin remains a PIM Patrol Area for which the PIM has financial and administrative responsibility.
- (4) (a) Note the increasing work-load of the Superintendent due to the continuing expansion of the patrol ministries.
- (b) Amend the Regulations of the PIM Committee, section 3.12.4, pertaining to the appointment of the Superintendent, by changing "25 per cent" to "50 per cent" commencing 1 January, 1998.
- (c) Authorise the full Committee to approve the new terms before their implementation takes effect.
- (5) Note the continued use of the term 'Padre' for those engaged in patrol ministries. Other designations may be used with the approval of the full-Committee.
- (6) Note the continued appointment of the Rev. J.J. Knapp as Superintendent (Part-time) and commend him and the Committee to the prayers of the Assembly.

97. Petition (i): The Assembly resumed consideration of Petition (i). (Min. 73).

98. Suspension of Standing Orders: Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly:

Suspend sufficient of the Standing Orders to allow for the resubmission of Min. 73(a) to (h) in its unamended form.

The motion was seconded and approved.

99. Petition (i): Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly:

Request Australian Presbyterian World Mission to establish a sub-committee with the

following responsibilities:

- (a) Formulate a national policy on Aboriginal issues.
- (b) Develop a national strategy for ministry among Aboriginal people.
- (c) Co-ordinate and assist presbyteries, congregations and other relevant organisations already involved in Aboriginal ministry.
- (d) Encourage and develop new work among the Aboriginal people.
- (e) Encourage and develop the training of suitable Aboriginal people for Christian ministry.
- (f) Liaise with other evangelical organisations involved in Aboriginal ministries including indigenous organisations.
- (g) Promote awareness of Aboriginal needs in local congregations.
- (h) Recruit, send and encourage support for Aboriginal ministry.

The motion was seconded and approved.

100. Standing Orders Resumed: Standing Orders were resumed.

101. Petition (i): Pursuant to notice the Rev. R.P.F. Benn moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Request A.P.W.M. to convene a conference between A.P.W.M., P.I.M., Home Mission and Evangelism Committees in all States to clarify responsibilities of the committees with regard to cross-cultural and Aboriginal ministries within Australia, and to investigate more effective ways to develop and support these ministries.
- (2) Provide \$5,000 for administrative expenses for this activity.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The petitioners were recalled to the bar and informed of the decision.

102. Suspension of Standing Orders: Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.A. Burke moved:

That the Assembly:

Suspend sufficient of the Standing Orders to permit consideration of Overture (xi).

The competence of the motion was challenged in terms of Min. 32.

The Moderator ruled the motion incompetent.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

103. Privilege: The Rev. P.F. Cooper raised a question of privilege.

The Moderator ruled there was no question of privilege.

Dissent was moved from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

104. Suspension of Standing Orders: Dr. P.E. Lush moved dissent from the Moderator's ruling on the decision to suspend Standing Orders (Min. 102).

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

The Rev. P.M. Campbell raised a point of order.

The Moderator upheld Mr. Campbell's point of order and ruled that debate on the motion to suspend Standing Orders should proceed and that the Rev. D.A. Burke be permitted to speak to his motion.

Mr. S.H. Fraser moved dissent from the Moderator's ruling.

The Moderator's ruling was disagreed with.

105. Privilege: Mr. J. Greig raised a question of privilege in that as a signatory to Overture (xi) but not a member of the N.S.W. Assembly, he was now unable to bring the overture to this Assembly and his rights had been infringed.

The Moderator ruled there was no question of privilege.

106. Overture (xi): An overture from ten members of the Assembly concerning

elders celebrating the sacraments lapsed in view of the decision of the Assembly not to suspend Standing Orders.

107. Variation of Business: The Rev. D.K. Robson moved:
That the Assembly:
Vary the order of business for the ninth sederunt in order to take notices of motion relating to the eldership at this point.
The motion was seconded and disapproved.

108. Overture (v): An overture from the Presbytery of the Hunter concerning the Questions asked of communicants and adherents at induction services was taken up and received.

The Rev. D.M. Smith stated the overture.

The competence of the overture was challenged:

The Moderator ruled the overture competent.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.M. Smith moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.M. Smith moved:

That the Assembly:

Send the overture to State assemblies and presbyteries under Barrier Act procedure, with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2000.

The motion was seconded and disapproved.

The Rev. C.D. Balzer moved:

That the Assembly:

Return the Overture to the Presbytery of the Hunter advising that the Assembly had resolved to take no action on the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

109. Overture (x): An overture from the Code Committee concerning the reinstatement of ministers who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia but not become ministers of another denomination, was taken up and received.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Logan and the Rev. B.M. Meller stated the overture.

Questions were asked:

Pursuant to notice the Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

Declare that the re-instatement to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of ministers who have resigned from the ministry and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination is a matter for presbyteries.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. C.D. Balzer moved as an amendment:

That the Assembly:

Delete all words after "Assembly" and insert the following:

Declare that, unless and until the Articles of Agreement are altered to the contrary, the reinstatement of people who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination is a matter for presbyteries.

The amendment was seconded and approved.

The motion as amended was approved.

Clauses (2) and (3) were approved:

The approved motions are as follow:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Declare that, unless and until the Articles of Agreement are altered to the contrary, the re-instatement of people who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who have not entered the Ministry of another denomination is a matter for presbyteries.
- (2) Request State Assemblies to enact, where required, laws to regulate the re-instatement of people who have resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and who have not entered the ministry of another denomination, such laws to operate unless and until the Articles of Agreement are altered so as to make other provisions for such re-instatement.
- (3) Request the Code Committee to draw up sample regulations for submission to the State assemblies for their consideration and enactment in order to preserve a uniform implementation of this decision.

110. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 101 to 103 were laid on the table.

111. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 7 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.
PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

TENTH SEDERUNT

112. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chalmers Church on Thursday 11 September, 1997, at 7.00 p.m., the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

113. Communication (vi): The Assembly resumed consideration of Communication (vi) (Min. 40).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.N. Jones moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Approve in principle the concept of funding a church planting project in Burnie, Tasmania.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.N. Jones moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the Finance Committee to raise an amount of \$35,000 per annum for three years to finance the project.

The motion was seconded.

The competence of the motion was challenged.

The moderator ruled the motion competent.

The motion was disapproved.

By leave of the House the Rev. R.P.F. Benn moved:

That the Assembly:

- (2) Encourage the General Assembly of Tasmania to publicise nationally the need of \$35,000 per annum for the purpose of church planting in Burnie.

The motion was seconded.

The competence of the motion was challenged.

The Moderator ruled the motion competent.

The competence of the motion was challenged on the grounds that the motion was a matter of government and therefore not the province of this Assembly.

The Moderator ruled the motion competent.

The motion of the Rev. R.P.F. Benn was approved.

114. Overture (iii): An overture from the Presbytery of Sydney concerning Standing Order 57 was taken up and received.

The Rev. J.M. Elliott stated the overture.

Questions were asked.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.M. Elliott moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend Standing Orders 57 and 58 to read:

57. The "Previous Question" must refer to the motion before the House. It cannot be moved in a Committee of the whole House or in a Select Committee.

58. The carrying of the "Previous Question" shall mean that the court does not consider it expedient to discuss further, or make a decision on the motion before the House; and the effect shall be that the court forthwith departs from the motion and takes up the next motion or Order of the Day.

The motion was seconded and approved.

115. Communication (i): A communication was received from the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia concerning the Procurator's Opinion on the competency of Overture (xii) of the 1994 General Assembly of Australia (G.A.A. B.B. 1994 Min. 112).

116. Communication (iii): A communication was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W. concerning the Procurator's Opinion on the competency of Overture (xii) to the 1994 General Assembly of Australia (G.A.A. B.B. 1994 Min. 112)

117. Communication (vii): A communication was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania concerning the Procurator's Opinion on the Overture concerning Question (1) asked at licencings, ordinations and inductions.

118. Communication (ii): A communication was received from the Presbytery of Flinders enclosing an Opinion of the Procurator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria concerning the competence of Overture (xii) to the 1994 General Assembly of Australia. (G.A.A. B.B. 1994 Min. 112).

119. Assembly's dealings pertaining to Women in the Eldership: Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the Code Committee to:

- (1) consider the matters raised in the report of the Business Convener on the History of the General Assembly's Dealing With Matters Pertaining to Women in the Eldership:
- (2) report to the next Assembly on the apparent failure of the Assembly to conclude the Barrier Act procedure proposed in 1967 by the Committee on the Service of the Laity in the Church and Community but apparently never implemented, which procedure was intended to clarify matters pertaining to the ordination of women to the office of the eldership.

The motion was seconded and approved.

120. GAA 1967 Decision on the Eldership: Pursuant to notice the Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note that at Minute 131(2) of the 1967 General Assembly of Australia, the Assembly declared that on the basis of its understanding of the doctrine of the eldership as set forth in the Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government under the heading "Other Church Governors", eldership is a service within the Church which can be performed appropriately by men and women.
- (2) Declare that this resolution was a statement of the view of the Assembly at that time which was not then, and is not now, binding on the State Churches.

The motion was seconded and approved.

121. Elders as Church Governors: The Assembly resumed consideration of the motion concerning Elders as Church Governors. (Min. 67)

The motion was seconded and approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Acknowledge that it has in the past proceeded on the basis that the issue of admission of women to the eldership is a matter of Church government which is the responsibility of State assemblies.
- (2) Declare that it is competent for a State assembly, by its own rules and regulations, to restrict admission to the eldership to men.

122. Speech on Constitutional Issues: Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.A. Burke moved:

That the Assembly:

Authorise the Clerk to include in the Blue Book, a copy of the speech by Mr. S.H. Fraser (Law Agent) concerning Constitutional Issues of Doctrine and Government Within the

Presbyterian Church of Australia.
The motion was seconded and approved.

123. Suspension of Standing Orders: Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Suspend sufficient of the Standing Orders to allow for the reconsideration of section 3.1.2. of the regulations of the APWM Committee. (Min. 45(4)).

The motion was seconded and approved.

124. A.P.W.M. Regulations: Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Approve section 3.1.2. of the regulations of the APWM Committee as follows:

2. The Committee shall consist of:

A convener elected by the General Assembly

The Convener of each of the APWM State Committees

An additional representative appointed by each of the APWM State Committees of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria

Seven members elected by the Assembly

The Assembly officers, ex officers

The National Director

The motion was seconded and approved.

125. Standing Orders Resumed: Standing Orders were resumed.

126. Emblem/Logo of the Church: Pursuant to notice the Rev. R. van Delden moved:

That the Assembly:

(1) Appoint an ad hoc committee, to work in conjunction with the ad hoc Committee on the Centenary of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to produce an emblem/logo which will reflect the mission of our church in Australia as we commence the new century.

(2) Appoint the members of the Committee as follows: Rev. R. van Delden (Convener), Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, Rev. D.J. Thurston, P.M. Campbell and the Assembly Officers with power to co-opt.

(3) Authorise the ad hoc committee to canvass widely throughout our denomination for opinions and ideas.

(4) Authorise the ad hoc committee to present draft proposals to the various courts, committees and organisations of our church for comment prior to finalising the design.

(5) Authorise the ad hoc committee to collate comments and bring a design to the Centenary General Assembly.

The motion was seconded.

By leave of the House Mr. P.J. Graham moved:

That the Assembly:

(6) Authorise the Finance Committee to provide funds for the committee of up to \$500.

The amendment was seconded and approved.

The motion as amended was approved.

127. People's Constitutional Convention: Pursuant to notice the Rev. G. Fraser moved:

That the Assembly:

Endorse the Very Rev. Prof. Allan Harman as a representative to the Peoples' Constitutional Convention and notify the Federal Government accordingly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

128. Report under Article (x): A report was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Western Australia under Article (x).

129. Very Rev. A.C. Stubs: By leave of the House the Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

Convey to the Very Rev. A.C. Stubs its prayers for God's blessing and healing power as he undergoes major surgery in the next month.

The motion was seconded and approved.

130. Addition to APWM Report: Pursuant to notice the Rt. Rev. S.J. Nicholson moved:

That the Assembly:

Note the omission of Dr. Peter and Mrs. Anne Davies (APWM/SIM, Niger) and Mr. Rob Kuiper (APWM/SIM, Niger) from the list of newly commissioned Partner Society Missionaries from the APWM Report, and commend them to the prayers of the Church.

The motion was seconded and approved.

131. Commission of Assembly: Pursuant to notice the Rev. Dr. Paul Logan moved:

That the Assembly:

(1) In accordance with Standing Order 99 and the general powers of the Assembly under Article IV appoint a Commission of the General Assembly with the following powers and duties:

(a) to deal with and determine each matter referred to it by the General Assembly; and

(b) to consider and determine any matter or issue or take such other action, being of a kind which would normally be dealt with by the General Assembly, but which because of its urgent nature requires prompt executive or judicial action.

(2) Direct the Commission of Assembly as follows:

(a) to act in the interest of the Church on every occasion so that the Church does not suffer or sustain any prejudice or harm which can be prevented;

(b) to observe all instructions given to the Commission by the General Assembly;

(c) to act in all its proceedings in accordance with the rules and constitution of the Church;

(d) to be accountable to and censurable by the General Assembly as the Assembly shall see fit;

(e) to refrain from enacting, amending or repealing any rules or regulations of the General Assembly, or entering into a consideration of any overture or motion proposing legislation;

(f) to deal only with matters specified in 1(a) and (b);

(g) to submit its minutes duly confirmed and all relevant papers to the next General Assembly through the Clerk.

(3) Establish the membership of the Commission of Assembly as follows:

(a) the Moderator, who shall be Chairman (see Standing Order 99);

(b) the Other Officers of the General Assembly (being the Clerks, Business Convener, Procurator and Law Agent);

(c) all past Moderators of the General Assembly;

(d) members from the States as follows:

	Ministers	Elders
New South Wales	3	3
Victoria	3	3
Queensland	2	2
South Australia	1	1
Western Australia	1	1
Tasmania	1	1

- (4) Direct each State Assembly to appoint members of the Commission from that State.
- (5) Authorise any vacancy which may occur to be filled by the State Assembly of the relevant State or in such manner as the State Assembly shall or shall have directed.
- (6) Declare that the quorum for a Commission of Assembly shall be 16 members from at least four of the States.
- (7) Authorise the Moderator to convene the Commission of Assembly when so appointed by the General Assembly, or when requested by a quorum of the members of the Commission, such Commission to meet in the first instance in the Chalmers Church, Sydney, or thereafter in such other place as the Commission may determine.
- (8) Authorise the Clerk of Assembly to take all steps which may be necessary or desirable to arrange for any meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly.
- (9) Authorise the Finance Committee to provide such funds as may properly be required in respect of any meeting of the Commission of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

132. Minutes: The minutes of the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sederunts were laid on the table and confirmed.

133. Committee Discharged: The Clerk moved that the Assembly thank and discharge the Committee to scrutinise the minutes and discharge the tellers. The motion was seconded and approved.

134. Commission to confirm Minutes: It was resolved that the Assembly appoint the Moderator, Clerks, Business Convener, the Rev. S.M. Bonnington and J.E. Webster a Commission to examine, correct and confirm the minutes of the eighth, ninth and tenth sederunts.

135. Appointment next Assembly: Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved that the Assembly:

- (1) Resolve to convene in Sydney and within the Sydney Town Hall on Tuesday 24 July, 2001 at 7 p.m. and thence at the Chalmers Church, Surry Hills, for subsequent sederunts.
- (2) Appoint a Commission consisting of the Moderator, Clerks, Business Convener, Procurator and Law Agent, with the Moderator as Chairman, of whom three members shall be a quorum, to appoint another time, place or date of meeting should it become impracticable for the Assembly to discharge its function at the time or place on the date appointed.

The motion was seconded and approved.

136. Thanks: It was resolved that the Assembly record its thanks to Mr. Keith Mar, General Secretary, and the Staff of the church offices in Sydney for their work in preparing for this Assembly and in particular to Miss. S.H. Jensen; Mr. P.J. Graham, Assembly Officer; the N.S.W. Christian Education Committee for organising the service centre and the Assembly prayer meeting; the Rev. K.D. Murray and J.M. Elliott in operating the overhead projector; Miss E. Ham for engrossing the Loyal Address; the Rev. S. de Plater for printing the name tags; Messrs. P. Banks and C. Grantham for assisting the Clerk and the Business Convener; Dr. P.E. Lush and the elders who assisted in arranging the Communion Service; the Assembly organists; Mrs. J. Angus and the ladies who assisted her in the provision of morning and afternoon teas, lunches and dinners; those who provided billets for commissioners; and all who assisted in the operations of the Assembly.

137. Dissolution: The business of the Assembly having been completed, the Moderator, after briefly addressing the House, intimated that the Assembly would next convene in terms of Minute 135 and dissolved the Assembly with praise, prayer and the pronouncing of the Benediction.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.
PAUL G. LOGAN, Clerk.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Deputy Clerk.

CERTIFICATE

The Minutes of the eighth, ninth and tenth sederunts, having been carefully corrected are confirmed as authorised in terms of Minute 134 thereof.

BRUCE H. CHRISTIAN, Moderator.

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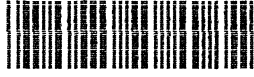
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