

RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN CHURCHES

Preface:

We confess the unity of the church (footnote: Nicene Creed; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21 Q/A 54; Belgic Confession art. 27). Anyone taking the unity of the churches seriously will as a result seek visible unity of the church. The Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (CGKN) seek unity with other reformed churches in the Netherlands, but also maintain official relations with reformed churches abroad.

In practice there are different ways in which we maintain official relations with foreign churches:

1. full correspondence
2. limited correspondence
3. 'contact'

Beside this, we participate in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), an ecumenical organization in which reformed churches from all over the world meet.

Full correspondence

We make difference between full and limited correspondence. Full correspondence includes, among other things, accepting each other's members and the possibility of mutually calling each other's pastors; furthermore, we consult each other in matters that are of importance for both churches. It also includes visiting each other's synods from time to time and exchanging Acts of Synod.

We have full correspondence with those churches that were established as a result of Dutch emigration. Dutch ministers from the CGKN have been receiving calls until recently by some of these churches. A In addition, former mission churches receive the status of sister church and as such we entertain a relationship of full correspondence with them. Moreover, we maintain this type of correspondence with some reformed churches in the United Kingdom.

Limited correspondence

'Limited correspondence' implies the same as full correspondence except the arrangements to accept each other's attestations, to call each other's pastors and to mutually consult in major decisions (such as changes in the confession or church order).

Contact

Along with both forms of correspondence, since 2001 there has been a third form of relationship with churches abroad, named: *contact*. The possibility of this form of relationship originated especially with a view to the churches in Eastern Europe. Although they do not always adhere to the same reformed confessions as we do, we can still support them in a practical way, such as support and cooperation in relation with mission work, theological training etc. At this moment this only applies to the Biserica Evanghelica Romana in Romania.

International reformed organization

In the past our churches were affiliated with a number of ecumenical organizations, at first the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), then the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). For many years we have participated now in the ICRC (International Council of Reformed Churches). This is an organization of which Reformed Churches around the world are members. The quadrennial conferences are a platform to meet each other in a formal way, but also informally.

In 2007 the ICRC established regional conferences. Our churches are part of the European Conference of Reformed Churches (EuCRC). As a rule these churches together with representatives of their missionary organizations and training institutes arrange a conference every two years. The focus of these conferences is mutual encouragement and biblical reflection. The collective call to spread the Gospel in Europe has a prominent place.

AUSTRALIA

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA (CRCA)

With the CRCA our churches have had a relationship from the time these churches were established. This relationship was further strengthened through membership of the REC. The CRCA were established by Dutch immigrants in the post-war years. They have about 9,000 members and adhere to the Three Forms of Unity as their confessional standard. With these churches we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

The central address is:

Mrs M. Jobse, 3 Renwick Close, Baxland NSW 2774, Australia tel. +61 2 47396622

e-mail: admin@crca.org.au

website: www.crc.org.au

BOTSWANA

REFORMED CHURCH OF BOTSWANA (RCB)

The RCB were founded in 1994 by a merger of the churches which originated from the mission work of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA) and the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika, the black branch of the NGK family (New Xanagas and Gantsi). At the moment there are still 3 congregations, with 8 mission posts and 11 preaching stations. The number of communicant members is about 350. 7 missionaries and pastors are working for the Reformed Church in Botswana of whom one is sent by the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CGKN). Since 1998 the 'RCB Disciple school' runs a staff forming training program and since 2004 there has been a more formal theological training: the Gantsi Bible College. The youth work is covered mostly by 'Life School'. The various churches are also engaged in development work (Kuru Development Trust), pre-school teaching (Bokamoso) and HIV/Aids work (True Love Waits and Gantsi Christian Aids Committee).

With this church we have limited correspondence.

BRAZIL

IGREJAS EVANGELICAS REFORMADAS NO BRASIL(IERB)

With the IERB our churches have had correspondence for quite some time. Among the by IERB adopted confessional standards are the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgian Confession.

This church, originating from Dutch emigration to Brazil, consists of 8 local churches at the moment with about 2,500 members. The congregations of Carambei, Castrolanda, Arapoti and Sao Paulo still have Dutch services regularly. Since 1974 there has always been a pastor of Christian Reformed origin serving the IERB. At the moment this is pastor Jan Hardeman, Rua Nassau, 279, Colonia Castrolanda, Castro – PR, CEP 84.196-200, Brazil, tel. +55 42 3234 1125.

e-mail: janhardeman50@gmail.com

web site: www.ierb.org.br/castrolanda

With this church we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

The central address is Av. Dos Pioneiros, 805, Caixa Postal 1167, Carambei – PR, 84.145-000 Brazil

Tel.+55 42 3231 1776

e-mail : secretaria@ierb.org.br

web site : www.ierb.org.br

CANADA/UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA (FRCNA)

With the FRCNA we have had full correspondence from the moment these churches were established. They consist of members from our and other churches who emigrated to Canada and the USA (especially after World War II). In the beginning these churches were served mainly by pastors from the CGKN. To these pioneers belonged, among others, the Revs. J. Hamstra, J. Tamminga, W.F. Laman, J. Keuning and G. Bilkes. Dutch pastors from the CGKN have also served as missionaries for the FRCNA: Rev. M. Rebel in Venda and Rev. E. Everts in Guatemala.

The FRCNA number about 4,500 members in twenty congregations; two of these are located in the USA. For their theological training the FRC have a close cooperation with the Heritage Reformed Congregations in the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids (MI).

With this church we have full correspondence.

Contact information :

The central address is that of the secretary of the Committee for Inter Church Relations:

C. Keuning, 80 Gatepost Place, R.R..1 Lynden, ON, L0R 1T0

e-mail: ckeuning@bellnet.ca tel. : 905-627-3910 fax : 905-628-2896

Website: www.frcna.org. Information about the local churches is to be found on this site under button 'about us/congregations'

ENGLAND AND WALES

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES (EPCEW)

The EPCEW was founded in 1996 in England as the result of a revival of Presbyterianism in England. At first, there were only three local churches; at present there are thirteen. The EPCEW have home mission stations and church plants. To this federation also belongs the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Sweden with two local churches.

The EPCEW adheres to the Westminster Standards. They are a federation with which the CGKN has affinity in every respect.

Our contacts with these churches date back to 2008. The EPCEW is also a member of the ICRC. **Since our General Synod of 2013 we have with these churches a relationship of full correspondence.**

Contact information

Clerk of Presbytery, Rev. Chris Kavanagh

10 Seabrook Road, Chelmsford, CM2 7JG, Great Britain

phone: +44 1242 576808 fax: +44 1245 330071

website: www.epcew.org.uk

email: clerk@epcew.org.uk

FRANCE

UNION NATIONALE DES ÉGLISES PROTESTANTES RÉFORMÉES ÉVANGÉLIQUES DE FRANCE
(UNEPREF)

Our correspondence with UNEPREF dates back to the time these and our churches were members of the REC. These French churches form a small federation in a largely secularized country.

With these churches we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

The central address of the Union is: Pasteur Gerard Fines, 13 Rue Auguste Bosc 30900 Nimes, France tel.: 0033 4 66 23 95 05

Secr. Mrs. Monique Bruguiere: uneprefcompta@orange.fr.

Website: www.eglises.org/types/unepref/

Information about local churches is to be found on this site under the button: 'Lieux de culte'

IRELAND

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND (EPCI)

Since the General Synod of 2007 we have an official relationship with the EPCI, with whom we had informal contacts for quite some time mainly via RPCI.

The EPCI seceded from the Irish Presbyterian Church in 1927.

There are 12 congregations, 6 of them in the Belfast region and 1 in Dublin. They do mission work in cooperation with the Free Church of Scotland. Missionary teachers were sent from the EPCI to Nigeria and South Africa. The confessional standards are the Westminster Standards and the Larger and Shorter Catechism. With these churches we have full correspondence.

Contact information :

Website: www.epcni.org.uk.

e-mail: epc@ukonline.co.uk

contact person: Rev. S.J. Roger, Huntingdale 16, BT39 9XB Ballyclare Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND (RPCI)

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland we have also come to know via membership of the REC. Just as with the FCS the relationship with the RPCI continued after this church and our churches left the REC.

The RPCI adhere to the Westminster Standards.

The total membership of the RPCI amounts to about 5,000 members.

With this church we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

The central address for ecumenical contacts is:

Prof. David McKay, 37 Old Holywood Road Belfast BT4 2HJ

Website: www.rpc.org

INDONESIA

GEREJA TORAJA MAMASA SULAWESI SELATAN INDONESIA (GTM)

With those churches where in the past our mission was active, contact is maintained as to practical matters by our Mission Committee. This applies also to the Gereja Toraja Mamasa.

The total membership of GTM is about 135,000.

With these churches we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

The central address is: Badan Pekerja Majelis Sinode Gereja Toraja Mamasa (BPS-GTM)

c/o rev. Yusuf Arta M. Th., Jln. Demmatande no. 17 Mamasa, Kab. Mamasa Prop Sulawesi Barat – Indonesia 91362

tel.: 00624282841003

e-mail: bps.gtm@gmail.com

JAPAN

REFORMED CHURCH IN JAPAN (RCJ)

Since the synod of 1995 our churches have had correspondence with the Reformed Church in Japan. The RCJ has about 9,000 members. They adhere to the Westminster Standards. Via her Theological Seminary in Kobe the RCJ maintains theological ties with the TUA (Theological University in Apeldoorn).

With these churches we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

The contact address is: Rev. Takashi Yoshida, chairman of the synod, International Ecumenism and Mission Cooperation Committee, 111 Minamikaji-machi, Wakabayashi-ku, Sendai-shi, 984-0061, Japan, tel/fax 022-225-0597, e-mail tyoshi26@yahoo.co.jp

Also contact person: prof. dr. Yasunori Ichikawa (rector of the Theological Seminary in Kobe).

e-mail: yasichikawa@nifty.com

website: www.rcj-net.org

NEW ZEALAND

REFORMED CHURCHES OF NEW ZEALAND (RCNZ)

Originally the RCNZ are also an 'immigrant church'. From their beginning these churches have had contacts with our churches; ties were strengthened by membership of the REC and since 1997 the ICRC.

The RCNZ number about 3,000 members. The Three Forms of Unity form their confessional standard. With these churches we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

Central address: Rev. B. Hoyt, 700 Park Road South, Hastings, New Zealand; tel. 06 876 4351

e-mail: bhoyt@voyager.co.nz

website : www.rcnz.org.nz

ROMANIA

BISERICA EVANGHELICA ROMANA (BER)

The BER originated in the 1920s because of objections towards the Romanian State Church with her unbiblical teaching, formalism and rites. BER does not have a confession but does have a statute based upon reformed principles. BER has about 20,000 confessing members. Together they form about 240 local congregations spread over the country, but concentrated in and around Bukarest. With these churches we have contact.

Contact information:

Contact address: Biserica Evanghelica Roman, Str. Carol Davila 48, Sector 5 Bucuresti cod 050454 Romania tel. +4021 4119622, +4031 4055134
e-mail : office@ber.ro or botgros@ber.ro
website: www.ber.ro

SCOTLAND

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (FCS)

Our relationship with the FCS dates back to the time when both churches were members of the REC. Both the FCS and our churches shared objections against certain developments within the REC. When the two churches terminated their membership the mutual ties remained.

The FCS adheres to the Westminster Standards. They number about 12,000 members. With these churches we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

Central address: Free Church offices, 15 North Bank Street, The Mound, Edinburgh EH1 2LS
Tel.: (0131) 226 5286 fax : (0131)220 0597
e-mail: offices@freechurchofscotland.org.uk
website: www.freechurch.org

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)

In the last decade of the twentieth century there arose a conflict within above mentioned church. This resulted in a split in 2000. The newly formed church is called the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) – FCS(C). Our churches don't choose sides in an internal conflict, and consequently decided to have a relationship with this church as well. We have full correspondence with this denomination.

Contact information:

Central address : Rev. J. MacLeod, Free Church Manse, Portmahomack. Tain, Ross-shire, IV20 1YL Scotland UK tel/fax : +44 1862 871467.
e-mail: principalclerk@fccontinuing.org
website: www.freechurchcontinuing.org

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/CANADA

ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA (OPC)

We have come to know the OPC via the REC. The synod of 1995 decided to have limited correspondence with this church. OPC has about 20,000 members and adhere to the Westminster Standards. With this church we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

Central address: 607 N. Easton Road, Building E, Box P, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania 19090-0920, USA. Tel. 001 215 830 0900, fax 001 215 830-0350.
Website : www.opc.org

HERITAGE REFORMED CONGREGATIONS (HRC)

The Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) is a solidly Biblical, Reformed, and orthodox denomination that is confessionally rooted in the Continental Reformation and influenced greatly by English Puritanism. The HRC came into being after a split within the Netherlands Reformed Congregations (NRC). The HRC number about 2000 members in nine churches in the US and Canada. The theological training takes place at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) in Grand Rapids.

Most of her ministers labour in North America, though three are presently labouring in Africa—two in South Africa and one in Zambia.

The HRC works closely together with the FRCNA, our sister churches in North America. Students of the FRCNA are trained at the PRTS. The HRC is also member of the ICRC.

At our General Synod of 2013 it was decided to offer a relationship of limited correspondence to the HRC.

Contact information:

website: www.heritagereformed.com

email: info@heritagereformed.com

SOUTH AFRICA

DIE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA (GKSA)

THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF SOUTH AFRICA (RCSA)

The ecclesiastical relationship with these churches has a long history. It dates back to the period after the Second World War when a lot of Dutch people emigrated to South-Africa.

Until recently the GKSA consisted of three national synods: the two black synods, Synod Middellande and Synod Soutpansberg and the white Synod Potchefstroom. In 2009 the synods Middellande and Potchefstroom merged into the General Synod GKSA, together with a small part of Synod Soutpansberg.

The correspondence with the part of Synod Soutpansberg that stayed out of this merger is maintained by our Mission Committee.

Together the GKSA and Synod Soutpansberg number over 150,00 members.

The GKSA adhere to the Three Forms of Unity.

The Theological Seminary of the GKSA in Potchefstroom and the TUA have made an agreement of cooperation. With this church we have full correspondence.

Contact information:

Central address of GKSA is: Administratiewe Buro GKSA, Posbus 20004, Noordburg 2522, Potchefstroom, RSA; tel. 00-27-18-2973986; fax00-27-18-2931042.

e-mail director dr. H.J.S. Vorster; direkteur@gksa.za

website: www.gksa.org.za

SOUTH KOREA

INDEPENDENT REFORMED CHURCH IN KOREA (IRCK)

The synod of 2007 decided to offer limited correspondence to IRCK, a small church community of 4 congregations, 5 pastors and 677 members.

Members of this church are dedicated to church life and make intensive study of the reformed confessions.

Among the wide variety of Presbyterian churches in South-Korea the IRCK have their own place with a deliberate reformed theology. Since 1973 the IRCK have had their own publishing company which has published 130 titles so far. In 2010 they started their own Theological Academy in which also students of related church federations study.

With this church we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

Corresponding secretary is dr. Heon Soo Kim.

e-mail: heonsookim@gmail.com; tel.: 00-31-31-314666220 ; address : 1152 Bisang-Dong, Anyang, Kyungki-Do, 431-050, South Korea

website: www.irc.or.kr

website Theological Seminary: www.ircseminary.kr

KOSIN PROTESTANT CHURCH IN KOREA (KPCK)

At the synod of 2001 it was decided to have limited correspondence with these churches. The Kosin church originated after World War II out of the big Presbyterian Church under leadership of some pastors who refused to take part in the Japanese emperor cult (worship). The Kosin church adheres to the Westminster Standards.

Since the past few years a growing number of students from this church is coming to do their (postgraduate) studies at the TUA.

The **KPCK** number about 230,000 baptized members, has 1,577 congregations and 2,300 pastors. The theological training in Chonan has about 400 students. The **KPCK** is characterized by a great mission zeal: about 220 missionaries are working in 46 countries worldwide.

With this church we have limited correspondence.

Contact information:

Central address: Rev. dr. Chong Soo Lim General Secretary **Kosin Protestant Church** in Korea
58-10 Banpo-Dong, Seocho-Ku, Seoul, South Korea 137-803,

Office: 00-82-2-592-0433 / fax: 00-82-2-592-5468

e-mail: E.ljspastor@paran.com and E.kosin@kosin.org, E.ekosin@hanmail.net

website: www.kosin.org/

also contact person: prof. dr. Hae Moo Yoo / e-mail: profyoo@gmail.com