

Appendix 9

Report on the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)

The annual Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was held in the year 2008 in the city of Newcastle, at the Cardiff Church facilities, home to the Hunter/Barrington congregation, from 12th – 15th May.

Rev Reinier Noppers attended the Synod as a fraternal delegate on behalf of the RCNZ, to which he was warmly welcomed and given the full privilege of the floor. He was also given opportunity to address the Synod more formally, in which he gave some details of our current situation, efforts taking place in local and overseas missions, and some of the matters before our Synod for 2008.

Time was also spent discussing ways we could benefit from one another, particularly in mission work.

Much of the matters before the Synod were administrative, with proposals to reissue an updated Decision Book, as well as an updated language Form for Subscription, the latter passing by a narrow margin. However, this means that in effect the PCEA has two versions of their Form for Subscription, the original (which is to be considered the final standard) and the updated language version.

The PCEA is actively involved in various missions, such as Australian Indigenous Ministries to the Aboriginal people, the ongoing “Christian Witness to Israel” movement, mission work in India, Peru and Colombia; and the Dumasani Theological Institute in South Africa, whose principal, Dr Alistair Wilson, spoke and gave further insight into the work being done and the needs there.

Ecumenical Relationships were discussed and continued with a number of churches, and thanks was expressed to the RCNZ for sending a delegate to their Synod. It was decided to send the Rev Trevor Leggott to our Synod as fraternal delegate, and we look forward to extending to him the same warm welcome.

The PCEA faces some issues similar to the RCNZ, particularly with the paucity of supply of men for ministry, and with several of their serving ministers either nearing or already past retirement age, the issue will not be resolved any time soon.

In conclusion, though the PCEA may be a small denomination, the opportunity to meet and talk face to face was deeply appreciated and our prayer is that this may lead to further cooperation in the Lord’s work.

Rev. Reinier Noppers.