

14. Deaconal Issues

14.1 REPORT DEACONAL ISSUES (Artt 20, 21, 184, 209, 210, 274)

- A. Br HSJ Vorster delivers the Report.
- B. **Decision:** The report is referred to the Commission Deaconal Matters.
- C. Financial matters are referred to the Commission for Finances.
- D. Rev J van Schaik reports on behalf of the Commission for Finances.
- E. Dr EJ de Beer reports on behalf of the Commission Deaconal Matters.
- F. Rev PJ Nel reports on behalf of the Commission for Finances on 2.5.2 to 2.5.4.

G. REPORT

1. Assignment (Acta 2003:146, 2.2)

1.1 *Synodal Deputies for Diaconal Issues*

- 1.1.1 The Deputies control all deaconal institutions of the GKSA in co-operation with the local church under whose resort the involved institution falls.
- 1.1.2 To act coordinating regarding deaconal institutions, connect with the denomination, provide monetary help, organise the administration and organisation via a Liaison deputy, administrate collected moneys for institutions.
- 1.1.3 To control and act on behalf of, as representatives of the denomination, all properties that was obtained according to his assignment.
- 1.1.4 To act pro-active via connection and coordination of all diaconal functions of the Reformed Churches.
- 1.1.5 To connect with the authority and other compassionate and charity institutions (according to CO, art 26).
- 1.1.6 To provide churches with help in the following way to help ministers that left the ministry before 1994 according to Church Order, articles 12, 79 or 80:
Take control of the managing, control and investment of available funds in the Supporting Fund (Benefit Fund for deaconates CO, art 25 (Acta 2003:45, 2.1.8.1)), ask additional voluntary help if circumstances require this, introduce all churches to the Supporting fund, create a positive attitude towards the Fund with members and deaconates and give guidelines to the Synod regarding contributions to the fund for the next three years.

Decision: Points 1.1.1 to 1.1.6 noted.

1.2 *The Needy and States of emergency (Acta 2003:147, 2.2.2.1)*

- 1.2.1 The primary assignment is to provide active and continuous help in co-operation with other local deaconates, and other Synods, to people that has no food, clothes and housing. In the helping process privilege should be given to requests in which the needy are enabled to be self-caring to a large extent.
- 1.2.2 Examine emergencies and States of emergency in and outside of the Republic of South Africa. Obtain information regarding the need of fellow Christians in and outside the GKSA as well as the others (Gal 6:10)
- 1.2.3 Make and keep contact with other church institutions and bodies involved in similar provision of help.
- 1.2.4 Provide the Churches with information and advice on relevant provision of help.
- 1.2.5 Have instruction to bring all needs to the attention of churches and deaconates and ask for contributions towards the Fund for States of Emergencies.
- 1.2.6 Contribute as far as possible that the dispensation of help should happen according to the requirements of the office of the deacons.
- 1.2.7 Find ways and means to introduce their work to churches under the resort of the General Synod.

- 1.2.8 Indicate somebody locally by constitution to send information, in co-operation with the Deputies for Radio and TV, issues to Radio, TV and church newsletters.
- 1.2.9 Inform churches about their assignment and provide deaconates with the applicable application forms.
- 1.2.10 The Deputies must provide the Synod with details of help to churches and institutions in their Report.

The following assignments were also given to the Deputies:

Decision: Points 1.2.1 to 1.2.10 noted.

1.3 *Assignments for the to be nominated Deputies (Acta 2006:168, 5)*

- 1.3.1 That financial control of all schemes under control of the SDDS will in future still resort under the Management of the Administrative Bureau.
- 1.3.2 The audited states must be laid before the Management of the Administrative Bureau yearly and also to the Audit Committee of the Member Meeting.
- 1.3.3 The Deputies must collaborate with the Residentia Foundation in order to find an agreement of co-operation and/or to obtain knowledge.

Decision: Noted.

2. Execution

2.1 *Matters to be noted*

2.1.1 Meetings

The executive committee is: Rev DJ Bakker (chair), Br HSJ Vorster (Director of the Administrative Bureau and Liaison Deputy of SDDS), rev P Fanoy, GS Kruger, MJ Erasmus, bros CJH Kruger; WJ Cilliers, K Vorster, J Pretorius and sr M Ferraira.

The other members of the directorate when compiling this Report are: prof H van der Wateren (Waterberg), br B Marx and rev JD Potgieter (Burgersdorp), bros IvH Fourie, F Venter (PKK Reddersburg), Br WJ Kruger (PKK Pretoria). Br GM van Blerk attended the meetings as adviser.

Regular Executive Committee meetings were held on determined dates. The directorate originally only met once a year, but in 2006 there was a decision to increase meetings with the full directorate to 3 times a year. This increase in meetings was necessary in order for decisions concerning hostels not to be taken in isolation, but rather to have the knowledge and inputs of all the role players. For this purpose Management Meetings were moved to a more central point namely Kroonstad.

Decision: Noted.

2.2 *Liaison*

- 2.2.1 Because liaison is directed inward and outward, focus has been placed on the following aspects regarding inward connections (denomination) since the 2006 Synod.
- 2.2.2 The timely availability of financial information. The Administrative Bureau took over the financial administration of the SDDS (Acta 2003:149, 3.1) and helped hostels in this terrain.
- 2.2.3 The compilation of necessary budgets and availability of monthly financial information.
- 2.2.4 Telephonic connections with the hostels and visits once or twice a year.
- 2.2.5 Some Women's gatherings were attended. The connection in this regard should be broadened in future.
- 2.2.6 Presentations were delivered at Diaconal Congresses.
- 2.2.7 Letters and questionnaires on various issues were directed towards deaconates and Church Councils on a regular basis. But doubt exists whether these letters received the necessary attention at the meetings and the denomination should take note of this. The reactions on the questionnaires were also bad. The only way in which good information could be obtained was through intensive follow-ups.

Decision: Points 2.2.1 to 2.2.7 noted.

2.3 *Collection and handling of funds*

2.3.1 Funds were received and administered in the following ways:

2.3.1.1 Where specific orders for the employment of Funds were received, there was strict adherence to these orders

2.3.1.2 Where funds were received for general employment by the SDDS, these funds were divided taking into consideration the following:

(i) Funds in the denomination that were sent directly to hostels.

(ii) Specific needs at the hostels.

(iii) The rest of the division was spread evenly.

(iv) Inputs by the children's homes regarding funds that were received for them.

(v) Division to provide for assistance to deaconates according to CO, art 25 (see 2.3.6).

2.3.1.3 The audited states are submitted to the Management of the Administrative Bureau and the Audit Committee of the Member Meeting yearly.

2.3.2 Personnel

2.3.2.1 *President Kruger Pretoria*

The current head and his wife, Br Kobus and sr Annatjie Vorster are assisted by 2 social workers, 6 child carers, 2 kitchen matrons, a secretary, needle worker and terrain manager. Cleaning and garden services are done by an outside instance.

2.3.2.1 *President Kruger Reddersburg*

A social worker, 12 assistants and 15 general assistants assist the house parents, br and sr Izak Fourie.

2.3.2.2 *Ons Huis Old Age Home Florida*

Mrs M Ferreira is the social worker and the institutional head. The rest of the personnel consists out of 1 Administrative Officer, 1 house keeper, 2 cooks, 4 sisters, 2 staff sisters, 6 assistant sisters, 7 nursing helpers, a factotum and garden worker.

2.3.2.3 *Dirk Postma Old Age Home Burgersdorp*

Mr J Pelser is the head of the home. The rest of the personnel consist out of 2 nurses, 2 nursing assistants, 10 carers, a secretary, a household caretaker, a washing house caretaker, 2 kitchen caretakers, a gardener and 14 general assistants. It was usually a problem to get enough nursing personnel.

2.3.2.4 *Waterberg Old Age Home Nylstroom*

Sr A Wolhuter is personnel head and nurse in control. The rest of the personnel consist out of 4 nurses, 8 nursing assistants, 4 assistants and 21 general assistantes. It was usually a problem to get enough nursing personnel.

2.3.2.5 *Adminstration*

Br HSJ Vorster is the Liaison Deputy. The personnel of the Administrative Bureau assist him. The administration was done for the SDDS with compensation.

2.3.3 Outward liaison

Liaison with the authorities.

Relationships were formed with Provincial Departments of Welfare where possible.

2.3.4 Subsidies

When compiling this Report the Deputies already knew that the subsidies for the children's Homes were determined on closely the same level for 2008/2009 than for the previous financial year. The indications are that the possibilities for the expanding of state subsidies are not very good.

2.3.5 Liaison with other instances

Liaison with the Poverty Commission. This commission was a sub-commission of the TKR that were called together with the purpose to enhance co-operation between local churches in communities in which social circumstances in the community and wider deteriorated. This issue will be further dealt with in the Supplementary Report.

Decision: Points 2.3.1 to 2.3.5 noted.

2.3.6 Relief Fund for Deaconates CO, art 25 (Acta 2003:45, 2.1.8.1)

2.3.6.1 The Deputies gave relief to the same three deaconates assisted at the previous Synod.

2.3.6.2 Letters were directed at deaconates to ask them to contribute to this regard referring to the guideline of R10 per confessing member. The issue will be discussed later on.

2.3.7 Correlating and Coordinating

2.3.7.1 General

2.3.7.1.1 The Deputies perform correlating and coordinating actions regarding:

(a) Collecting and handling of funds

(b) Determination of policy regarding personnel:

2.3.7.2 Institutions

2.3.7.2.1 President Kruger Pretoria

The children's home is in the congregation of the Reformed Church East Moot and accommodates 63 children

2.3.7.2.2 President Kruger Reddersburg

The children's home is in the congregation of Reddersburg and accommodates 63 children

2.3.7.2.3 Children's Homes – General

During the last three years the Managements and personnel of our children's homes cooperated on all terrains by meeting at least twice a year to discuss issues of mutual importance.

2.3.7.2.4 Ons Huis Old Age Home Florida

This hostel accommodates approximately 50 elderly

2.3.7.2.5 Dirk Postma Old Age Home Burgersdorp

This hostel accommodates approximately 49 elderly

2.3.7.2.6 Waterberg Old Age Home Nylstroom

This hostel accommodates approximately 71 elderly

Decision: Points 2.3.6 to 2.3.7.2.6 noted.

2.4 *Issues that has to be decided by the Synod*

2.4.1 Deputies liaising with Residentia Foundation

2.4.1.1 The Management of the SDDS realised, after long consideration, that the operation of old age homes and the care of the elderly in old age homes, is a specialised task and not a task for the SDDS. It rather is the task of the SDDS to see to it that the needy elderly in the old age homes are assisted by the deaconates where necessary, and to give assistance from the wider denomination where needed to the involved deaconates to fulfil their diaconal duty.

Decision: Noted.

2.4.1.2 A small percentage of the inhabitants of the old age homes are Reformed members, but the perception and expectation exists with the residents, and in some incidents also their relatives, that the GKSA is responsible for all shortages on the operation of old age homes. This fact that gives rise to fund-raising campaigns place a great amount of pressure on the managements and institutional heads.

Decision: Noted.

2.4.1.3 The Management of the SDDS then started talking to the Residentia Foundation (previously the Reformed Foundation). The result of these talks were that there has been decided that the Residentia Foundation will take over the assets and operation of Waterberg Old Age Home, Nylstroom and Ons Huis Old Age Home, Florida from 1 April 2008, but the Management of the Foundation could not take over Huis Dirk Postma in Burgersdorp as well, because they already manage a old age home in Bethulie close by under difficult circumstances.

Decision: Approved. (This point refers to the actions of SDDS to transfer Waterberg Home for the Elderly [Nylstroom] and Ons Huis Home for the Elderly [Florida] to Residentia Foundation.)

- 2.4.1.4 The advantages of the take over of the hostels by the Foundation are the following:
- 2.4.1.4.1 The Foundation already manages 20 old age homes and the SDDS only 3. The success with which the Foundation fulfil this task is such that the National Department of Social Development requested that the Foundation take over a home in Eersterus in Pretoria.
- 2.4.1.4.2 Because of their neutral nature it is easier for the Foundation to bargain for funds from the broader public and the business sector.
- 2.4.1.4.3 Because of its neutral nature the Foundation can more easily bargain with the supportive system (family) of the residents.
- 2.4.1.4.4 This issue was finally resolved on 31 March 2008 with the exception of the transfer of the pensions of the personnel.

Decision: Noted. The Synod gives the assignment to SDDS that the unconcluded matters mentioned in the report be concluded.

2.4.2 Community co-operation: Burgersdorp

- 2.4.2.1 In the instance of Huis Dirk Postma the church community of Burgersdorp decided to take over the assets and operation of the old age home with the help of others interested. Therefore it was here also possible to expand the supportive basis of the old age home by involving the community in support for the old age home.

- 2.4.2.2 This issue has not been completed.

Decision: Noted. The Synod gives the assignment to the SDDS that the unconcluded matters mentioned in the report be concluded.

2.4.3 Cooperation with deaconates

- 2.4.3.1 The needy and States of emergency

- 2.4.3.1.1 Letters were sent to Church Councils and deaconates to strengthen the Fund or to bring specific need to the attention of the Deputies.

- 2.4.3.1.2 Issues that needed attention and have received the awards: With these awards the assignments of the Synod has been adhered to in a strict manner

- (i) Need of the residents of Zimbabwe
- (ii) Reformed Church Bethulie
- (iii) Reformed Church Johannesburg South
- (iv) Reformed Church Potchefstroom
- (v) Reformed Church Mariental
- (vi) Reformed Church Eden

- 2.4.3.1.3 Although the issue of available aid to deaconates in need has been sent out often, we receive very little requests for assistance from the relief fund while we suspect that need must exist. The Deputies are forced, in terms of the assignment of the Synod, to enquire about need that may exist.

- 2.4.3.1.4 A questionnaire to smaller deaconates had a very weak response. During 2008 questionnaires has been sent to the deaconates once more. These questionnaires were followed-up telephonically and the following were evident from the processed answers:

- 2.4.3.1.4.1 Some deaconate chairs do not receive letters by post

- 2.4.3.1.4.2 Deaconates do not give enough attention to letters received

- 2.4.3.1.4.3 The quick changes in the deaconates provide a problem with continuity.

- 2.4.3.1.4.4 Not enough knowledge regarding the completion of tasks.

- 2.4.3.1.5 This issue will be further discussed in the Supplementary Agenda.

Decision: Points 2.4.3.1 to 2.4.3.1.5 noted.

2.4.4 Relief Fund for Deaconates CO, art 25 (Acta 2003:45, 2.1.8.1)

- 2.4.4.1 The Deputies sent letters to the Deaconates explaining the decision of the National Synod 1994 and emphasising the guideline of a voluntary contribution. In the meantime three deaconates were cared for by the Deputies according to CO, art 12, 79 or 80 (ministers).

- 2.4.4.2 Some deaconates did answer to these requests, but the Deputies were forced, contradictory to the diaconal assignment, to add more to this expenditure from the general awards each year.

2.4.4.3 This issue will be further discussed in the Supplementary Agenda.

Decision: Noted.

2.5 *Regarding Glenzicht Retirement Resort*

2.5.2 The Glenzicht project is in a completion phase this year with only the following not completed:

2.5.2.1 The completions of the retention work that still have to be done by the Developer.

2.5.2.2 The completion of owned interest to residents by the Developer that received and administrated their money with the original buying of life right. This also caused us to refer the issue to the attorneys.

2.5.2.3 The consolidation of the two plots on one terrain that has not been completed according to contract by Marprieu.

2.5.2.4 The care unit for which the infrastructure is in place.

2.5.3 Because of all there unfinished issues we appointed a full-time project help.

2.5.4 Contradictory to the assignment by the Synod the project did not run without cost.

Decision: Points 2.5.1 to 2.5.4 noted. The to-be-appointed Deputies should pay urgent attention to the matters that are still outstanding.

2.5.5 The SDDS give thanks to everybody that worked hard and with great effort in the project, in particular rev DJ Bakker and Br CJH Kruger.

Decision: Approved.

3. Financial states

Will be reported on in the Supplementary Agenda.

Decision: Noted. Refer to the Financial Commission.

4. Assignments to the named Deputies (Acta 2003:146, 2.2)

4.1 *Synod Deputies for Diaconal Issues*

4.1.1 The Deputies control all diaconal institutions of the GKSA in cooperation with the local church under whose resort the involved institution functions.

4.1.2 To act coordinating regarding diaconal institutions, connecting with the denomination, giving financial help, the administration and organisation of arranging for a Liaison Deputy, administering of collected funds for the institutions.

4.1.3 To control and act on behalf of all properties that were obtained according to assignment as representatives of the denomination.

4.1.4 To act pro-active through the connecting and coordinating of all diaconal functions of the Reformed Churches.

4.1.5 To connect with the authority and other compassionate and charity institutions (CO, art 26).

4.1.6 To provide churches with help in the following way to help ministers that left the ministry before 1994 according to Church Order, articles 12, 79 or 80:

Manage the managing, control and investment of available funds in the Supporting Fund (Benefit Fund for deaconates CO, art 25 (Acta 2003:45, 2.1.8.1)), ask additional voluntary help if circumstances require this, introduce all churches to the Supporting fund, create a positive attitude towards the Fund with members and deaconates and give guidelines to the Synod regarding contributions to the fund for the next three years.

Decision: Points 4.1.1 to 4.1.6 approved.

4.2 *The Needy and States of emergency (Acta 2003:147, 2.2.2.1)*

4.2.1 The primary assignment is to provide active and continuous help in cooperation with other local deaconates, and other Synods, to people that has no food, clothes and housing. In the helping process privilege should be given to requests in which the needy are enabled to be self-caring to a large extent.

4.2.2 Examine emergencies and States of emergency in and outside of the Republic of South Africa. Obtain information regarding the need of fellow Christians in and outside the GKSA as well as the others (Gal 6:10)

- 4.2.3 Make and keep contact with other church institutions and bodies involved in similar provision of help.
- 4.2.4 Provide the Churches with information and advice on relevant provision of help.
- 4.2.5 Have instruction to bring all needs to the attention of churches and deaconates and ask for contributions towards the Fund for States of Emergencies.
- 4.2.6 Contribute as far as possible that the dispensation of help should happen according to the requirements of the office of the deacons.
- 4.2.7 Find ways and means to introduce their work to churches in the resort of the General Synod.
- 4.2.8 Indicate somebody locally by constitution to send information, in cooperation with the Deputies for Radio and TV, issues to Radio, TV and church newsletters.
- 4.2.9 Inform churches about their assignment and provide deaconates with the applicable application forms.
- 4.2.10 The Deputies must provide the Synod with details of help to churches and institutions in their Report.

The following assignments were also given to the Deputies:

Decision: Points 4.2.1 to 4.2.10 approved.

4.3 *Assignments for the named Deputies (Acta 2006:168, 5)*

- 4.3.1 That financial control of all schemes under control of the SDDS will in future still resort under the Management of the Administrative Bureau.
- 4.3.2 The audited states must be laid before the Management of the Administrative Bureau yearly and also to the Audit Committee of the Member Meeting.

Decision: Approved.

H. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

1. Matters for notice by Synod

1.1 *Assistance fund for deaconates in terms of CO, art 25*

The matter concerning contributions from the denomination to assist deaconates (currently 3) in the care for CO, artt 12, 79, 80 ministers have now been brought to the table at several Synods. The Deputies brought this matter to the attention of the deaconates again in obedience to Synod 2003 (Acta 203:145, 2.1.8) and Synod 2006 (Acta 2006:165, 2.4.1.1).

The Deputies are grateful to report that for the 2007/2008 financial year adequate contributions were received to cover the expenditures.

Decision: Noted.

2. Matters for decision before Synod

2.1 *Liaison with other institutions*

This Subcommittee of the ICC consisted of members from the APK, GKSA, NGK and NHK. The commission met frequently and the method decided on was to identify an impoverished community, to involve role players from the church communities concerned and to then offer a model of cooperation to them. The aim was to combine powers that work in the same community on the same terrain in order to avoid duplication. The community of Swartruggens was identified as a pilot project and a model was offered to them. The roleplayers in this community indeed took hands and indications are that the project is a success.

A report was laid before the ICC and the group is currently awaiting sanctioning for the Subcommittee to continue with its activities.

The Deputies are also of the opinion that this cooperation should continue and that more communities can be united in this manner in order to address the growing poverty issue in our country.

Decision: Noted.

2.2 *The destitute and states of emergency*

2.2.1 Questionnaire

The *Deputies:States of Emergency* has sent out a questionnaire to determine the need in our denomination, as mentioned in the Agenda. By following up on all outstanding questionnaires telephonically answers were received from 43% of all deaconates.

The result that came to light was as follows:

- (i) An extra-ordinary large number of children are involved in needy situations.
- (ii) 65% of the deaconates indicated that they are aware of all the poverty in the congregations.
- (iii) Only 41% of the deaconates indicated that they can provide for 100% of the need.
- (iv) 22% of the poverty involves members that are younger than 40 years old.

Decision: Results (i) to (iv) noted.

Recommendation

That an encompassing project be launched by SDDS to:

- (i) Identify the need in the church denomination
- (ii) Find ways to address the needs
- (iii) Launch projects in order to address the problem.

Decision: Recommendation (i) to (iii) approved.

2.2.2 Medical help

The primary assignment of the *Deputies:States of Emergency* is, and we quote: “to provide genuine and continuous assistance to people who have no food, clothing or shelter.” However, there is an increasing amount of requests for medical help received by the Deputies. The nature of this help is usually cases of a serious nature where the medical costs are significant. In only one single case where the Deputies became involved, the patient was treated at a State hospital.

The question now arises whether the *Deputies:States of Emergency* of SDDS should become involved with such matters, and if so, in which way. The request is that the Synod would pronounce a verdict regarding this matter.

Decision: That no funds from the State of Emergency Fund be applied to medical costs. The Deputies should bring the medical need to the attention of churches and deaconates based on their assignment in 4.2.5.

2.3 *Care for retired employees of SDDS*

At a late stage of the service period of the Deputies the Deputies became aware of the need in the day-to-day care existing with some of the previous employees of SDDS. The problem arose from the fact that remuneration was not adequate and that current pensions of these persons are not enough. In some cases assistance is given, but there is no fixed method for finding a solution to this problem.

Recommendation

- (i) That approval is given that a fund beginning from R200 000 is started with the goal of caring for existing previous employees in their day-to-day needs.
- (ii) That the Deputies to be named will investigate this as a matter of priority and will immediately get measures in place so that this matter can be concluded with dignity.

Decision: Recommendation (i) to (ii) approved.

2.4 *Recommendation for the Deputies to be named*

2.4.1 The Synod appoints the following Deputies:

2.4.1.1 A chairperson, vice chairperson and one person to deal with matters at Glenzicht on behalf of SDDS. A further 4 persons are appointed of whom 2 comes from the young churches (preferably 1 from the Freestate and 1 from the Gauteng region).

2.4.1.2 Furthermore the Management of the two children's homes should appoint 2 Deputies each.

2.4.1.3 The Director of the Administrative Buro is appointed as Liaison deputy and the 2 Heads of the institution are ex officio deputies.

2.4.1.4 Deputy:State of Emergency is not appointed again. These matters will in future be handled by the SDDS.

Decision: Approved that at least two of the Deputies are deacons.

2.4.1.5 The to-be-appointed Deputies receive the assignment to consider the involvement of the SDDS in the management of children's homes in the light of CO, art 36. In its considerations attention should be paid to the reasons why the SDDS Homes for the Elderly were transferred to the Residentia Foundation, as well as the involvement of the SDDS (and deaconates of all churches) with the spiritual and physical care of the children in the homes.

Decision: Approved.

3. Financial Report

Decision: Approved.

See Addendum : Financial Statements at back of Acta.