

20.3 REPORT DEPUTIES CHURCH ORDER, ARTICLE 48 (Artt 83, 286)

- A. Dr PH Heystek delivers the Report.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to the Commission for Church Matters: Historical and Church Governance.
- C. Dr WC Opperman reports on behalf of the Commission for Church Matters: Historical and Church Governance.

D. REPORT

1. Assignment

(See Acta 2006:391, 4)

- 1.1 Continue the discussion on outstanding issues and on the implementation of the proposed new system with delegates from Synods Midlands and Soutpansberg.
- 1.2 Carry on with the implementation of the new system, gradually if necessary, according to the agreement reached with the other Synods.
- 1.3 Attend to all the matters which are essential for the orderly implementation of the new system (eg church polity, administrative, organisational, financial, legal and language aspects).
- 1.4 Involve other Deputies and experts, if necessary, to ensure the successful accomplishment of the above-mentioned tasks.
- 1.5 To make documents (in Afrikaans as well) of meetings with other Synods available to future Synods of the RCSA.

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.5 noted.

2. Procedure

2.1 Meetings

The Deputies had meetings on the following dates: 4 September 2006, 26 February and 4 June 2007, and 5 May 2008.

- 2.1.1 Notice of the meetings has regularly been sent to the Deputies of Synod Potchefstroom, Synod Midlands and Synod Soutpansberg.
- 2.1.2 Meetings were held with the Deputies Correspondence of the Partikuliere Synods in question and with the Deputies Correspondence of the new Regional Synods.

2.2 Correspondence:

On account of various circumstances, communication with the Deputies of all three the above-mentioned Synods was not always successful. Poor communication could have led to misunderstandings.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.2 noted.

3. Matters to be noted by Synod

- 3.1 The following seven (7) Regional Synods comprising the various Classes has been achieved:

REGIONAL SYNOD BUSHVELD

Deputy Correspondence: Br PCZ Viljoen (pietjoen@qcs.co.za)

Classis Limpopo

Deputy Correspondence

Rev SP Venter (Pietersburg)

Chinhoyi
Confession Church Zambia
De Hoop
Dendron
Gweru

Classis Waterberg

Deputy Correspondence

Rev JG Noëth (Naboomspruit)

Aranos
Biermanskool
Colesberg
Koedoesrand
Magol

Hoedspruit
Laeveld
Louis Trichardt
Lusaka
Magalakwin
Mahwelereng
Malamulele
Messina
Middle-Letaba
Musina-Nancefield
Phalaborwa
Pietersburg
Pietersburg-Noord
Pietersburg-Suid
Potgietersrus
Potgietersrus-Wes
Songozwi
Soutpansberg
Trans-Letaba

Marble Hall
Naboomspruit
Namib Kus
Nylstroom
Otjiwarongo
Outjo
Vaalwater
Warmbad
Waterberg

Classis Krokodilrivier

Deputy Correspondence
Rev CJ van Vuuren (Die Moot)

Boegoepan
Brits
Brits-Wes
Die Moot
Dithabeng
Drieviersboom
Elandskraal
Krokodilrivier
Makolokwe
Mahwelereng
Matlabas
Odi
Odi-North
Seshego
Thabazimbi
Tswelapele
Ysterberg

REGIONAL SYNOD NORTHWEST

Deputy Correspondence: Rev SFF van der Walt (sffvdw@tiscali.co.za)

Classis Noordwes

Deputy Correspondence:
Dr J Lion-Cachet (Klerksdorp)

Agisanang (Sannieshof)
Batho-Bathostad
Bloemhof
Christiana
Deelpan
Delareyville
Ebenhaeser
Goeie Hoop
Jouberton
Khuma
Klerksdorp
Klerksdorp-Noord
Knapdaar
Madibogo
Matshau-Ottosdal
Migdol

Classis Molopo

Deputy Korrespondensie:
Rev CCA Vrey (Rustenburg-Noordoos)

Boichoko
Boikhutso
Ga-Motlatla
Itsoseng
Kgetleng
Khunwana
Kopela
Koster
Kraaipan
Lebone
Lichtenburg
Lorato
Mafikeng
Monnakato
Rustenburg
Rustenburg-Noordoos

Orkney
Sannieshof
Schweizer-Reneke
Stilfontein
Tigane (Hartbeesfontein)
Tswaing
Uitschot
Vaalharts
Vryburg
Wolmaransstad

Rustenburg-Wes
Swartruggens
Tlhabane
Tshing
Uitkyk
Ventersdorp
Waterkloof
Zeerust

Classis Griekwaland-Wes

Deputy Correspondence:
Rev AN du Plessis (Postmasburg)

Bontleng
Daniëlskuil
Delportshoop
Duineveld
Groenwater
Huhudi
Kathu
Kimberley
Kuruman
Maruping
Metsi A Matala
Moshaweng
Olifantshoek
Postmasburg
Tlhakala Tlou
Upington

Classis Potchefstroom

Deputy Correspondence:
Br G Erasmus (Potchefstroom)

Boskop
Buffeldoorns
Cachet
Ikageng
Ikageng-Bophirima
Khutsong
Kokosi
Modderfontein
Noordbrug
Potchefstroom
Potchefstroom-Moorivier
Potchefstroom-Noord
Potchefstroom-Oos
Potchefstroom-Suid
Promosa
Tlokwe Botshabela
Tuma-Hole

Classis Etosha

Deputy Correspondence:
Rev L van der M Vogel (Walvisbaai)

Gobabis
Grootfontein
Hentiesbaai
Karasburg
Keetmanshoop
Mariental
Okahandja
Tsumeb
Walvisbaai
Windhoek
Windhoek-Suid

EASTERN REGIONAL SYNOD

Deputy Correspondence: Rev CA Jansen (c.a.jansen@absamail.co.za)

Classis Piet RetiefDeputy Correspondence:
Rev DJA Booyens (Ermelo)

Bethal
Eendracht
Ermelo
Kriel
Piet Retief
Pongola
Secunda
Standerton
Volksrust
Vrede

Classis LydenburgDeputy Correspondence:
Rev PA Nel (Witbank)

Ackerville
Bankfontein
Barberton
Belfast
Carolina
Groblersdal
Hendrina
Kayamazane
Komatipoort
Kwa Ndebele
Lydenburg
Mahlangu
Middelburg
Middelburg-Noord
Nelspruit
Stoffberg
Waterval Boven
Witbank
Witbank-Suidoos
Witrivier
Wondersig

Classis Sentraal OosrandDeputy Correspondence:
Rev DJ Bakker (Boksburg)

Alberton
Alexandra
Boksburg
Boksburg-Suid
Germiston
Kathlehong
Kemptonpark
Kemptonpark-Mooifontein
Kemptonpark-Noord
Primrose
Tembisa
Tembisa-Wes

Classis Verre OosrandDeputy Correspondence:
Dr SP van der Walt (Benoni-Noord)

Benoni
Benoni-Noord
Brakpan
Brakpan-Suid
Daveyton
Delmas
Heidelberg
Kwa Thema
Nigel
Noord-Oosrand
Ratanda
Springs
Springs-Oos
Tsakane

REGIONAL SYNOD PRETORIA

Deputy Correspondence: Br WJ Cilliers (oosmoots@mweb.co.za)

Classis MootCorresponding Council:
Reformed Church Die Kandelaar

Andeon
Bergsig
Bronkhorstspuit

Classis SuidwesCorresponding Council:
Reformed Church Rietvallei

Atteridgeville
Centurion
Daspoort

Daspoort
Die Kandelaar
Eloffsdal
Innesdal
Oos Moot
Pretoria
Pretoria-Meintjeskop
Pretoria-Wonderboom-Suid
Totiusdal

Elandspoort
Lyttelton
Olievenhoutbosch
Pretoria-Wes
Rietvallei
Rooihuiskraal
Wierdapark

Classis Noordelike Pretoria

Deputy Correspondence:
Rev P van Wyk (Pretoria-Noord)

Akasia
Ga Rankuwa
Kameeldrift
Klipgat
Mabopane
Pretoria-Annlin
Pretoria-Magalieskruin
Pretoria-Montanapoort
Pretoria-Noord
Pretoria-Rooiwal
Temba
Wonderboompoort

Classis Oostelike Pretoria

Corresponding Council:
Reformed Church Pretoria-Alkantrant

Cullinan
Derdepoort
Mamelodi-East
Mamelodi-West
Meyerspark
Pretoria-Alkantrant
Pretoria-Brooklyn
Refilwe
Silverton
Wapadrant
Waterkloofrand

REGIONAL SYNOD RANDVAAL

Deputy Correspondence: Dr D Lartz (deonlartz@absamail.co.za)

Classis Groter Johannesburg

Corresponding Council:
Reformed Church Randburg

Alexandra
Bergbron
Bybels Geref Kerk
Diepkloof
Dube
EBN
GNCC
Jabavu
Johannesburg-Suid
Linden
Meadowlands
Midrand
Newclare
Randburg
Tladi
Tshiwelo

Classis Vaalrivier

Corresponding Council:
Reformed Church Vanderbijlpark-Oos

Alberton-Wes
Boipatong
Brackenhof
Edenvale
Meyerton
Sasolburg
Sebokeng
Sharpeville
Vaalpark
Vanderbijl
Vanderbijlpark-Oos
Vanderbijlpark-Suid
Vereeniging 95
Vereeniging-Oos
Zamdela

Classis Wesrand

Corresponding Council:
Reformed Church Witpoortjie

Carletonville
Dobsonville

Kagiso
Krugersdorp
Krugersdorp-Oos
Krugersdorp-Wes
Magaliesburg
Mohlakeng
Muldersdrif
Noordrand
Ontdekkers
Roodepoort
Tarleton
Toekomsrus
Wesrand
Westonaria
Wilropark
Witpoortjie

SOUTHERN REGIONAL SYNOD

Deputy Correspondence: Rev MP Fourie (mpfourie@lantic.net)

Classis Boland

Deputy Correspondence:
Rev H Reinecke (George)

Agulhas
Bellville
Bellville-Oos
Clanwilliam
Crossroads
Eden
Elsiesrivier
George
Grassy Park
Hermanus
Kaapstad
Kleinmond
Mosselbaai
Oudtshoorn
Paarl
Stellenbosch
Stilbaai
Strand
Vredenburg/Saldanha
Worcester

Classis Burgersdorp

Deputy Correspondence:
Rev MP Fourie (Aliwal-Noord)

Aliwal-Noord
Barkly Oos
Burgersdorp
De Aar
Lyciumville
Maclear/Elliot
Molteno
Nozizwe
Oranjerivier
Philipstown
Steynsburg
Strydenburg
Venterstad
Westdene

Classis Karoo-Kei

Corresponding Council:
Reformed Church Queenstown

Addo
Bhayi
Cradock/Somerset-Oos
Dordrecht
Jeffreysbaai
Mdantsane
Middelburg (Kaap)

Monti
Oos Londen
Port Elizabeth
Queenstown
Rehoboth
Renosterberg
Uitenhage

REGIONAL SYNOD VRYSTAAT & KWAZULU-NATAL

Deputy Correspondence: Rev JL van der Schyff (gkwelkomnoord@telkomsa.net)

Classis Noord-Vrystaat

Deputy Correspondence:

Rev MJ Letebele (Thabong & Phomolong)

Bothaville
Bultfontein
Hennenman
Kroonstad
Kutloanong
Meloding
Monyakeng
Odendaalsrus
Orania
Parys
Phomolong
Rammolutsi
Senekal
Thabong
Theunissen
Ventersburg
Viljoenskroon
Virginia
Welkom
Welkom-Noord

Classis Kwazulu-Natal-Noord

Deputy Correspondence:

Rev AP de Jager (Vryheid)

Empangeni
eKwandeni
Glencoe
iSandlwana
Kwa-Ndindindi
Ladysmith
Munywana
Newcastle
Vryheid

Classis Oos-Vrystaat

Deputy Correspondence:

Rev JH Cilliers (Reitz)

Bethlehem
Ficksburg
Frankfort
Harrismith
Heilbron
Ladybrand
Lindley
Reitz
Steynsrus
Tweespruit
Qwa-Qwa

Classis Suid-Vrystaat:

Deputy Correspondence:

Rev HJ Briel (Petrusburg/Boshof)

Bethulie
Bloemburg
Bloemfontein
Bloemfontein-Noord
Bloemfontein-Suid
Bloemfontein-Suidheuwels
Bloempark
Boshof
Botshabelo
Brandfort
Emmanuel-Matoporong
Fauresmith
Heidedal
Jacobsdal
Koffiefontein
Mafeteng - Lesotho
Mohaleshoek - Lesotho
Petrusburg
Phahameng - Bloemfontein
Philippolis
Reddersburg

Thabana-Khubetsoana
Thaba Nchu
Vleuels

Classis Kwazulu-Natal-Suid

Deputy Correspondence:

Br B Venter (Scribe) (Suidkus)

Amanzimtoti
Durban
Durban-Noord
Estcourt
Kwa Mashu
Kwa-Mncane
Mid-Illovo
Ndalen
Pietermaritzburg
Pinetown
Suidkus
Umbumbulu

3.2 The Deputies of Synod Soutpansberg have failed to attend any meeting of the Deputies Correspondence of Synod Art 48 Church Order. Correspondence received from the Deputy for Correspondence of Synod Soutpansberg, read as follows:

3.2.1 "Dr PH Heystek

Thank you for your invitation.

I am writing this e-mail as a chairpeson of the Deputies of art 48 of the Synod Soutpansberg.

In our last meeting we agreed that Potchefstroom & Midlands will go on with the restructuring process because Soutpansberg decided that they can not go on with restructuring because there are some key issues that need to be solved before any restructuring. And for that reason we can not attend the meeting if it is going to discuss the issue of restructuring at present. I will be happy if you can tell me the content of an Agenda.

Rev Nefefe Silas"

3.2.2 "Pieter Heystek

We received your e-mail in which you have indicated tha we should look to 8.2 page 9 of the munites.

It seems as some of the Deputies of Midlands and Potchefstroom Synods do not know the whole history of the discussions we had in the past.

It must be clear to your Deputies that Synod Soutpansberg is very much infavour of the church unity. Infect we have initiated the whole process during the time of apartheid government.

In our last meeting with Deputies from Potchefstroom and Midlands we agree not to disagree. In other words our position was very much clear. we said "Since there are fundamental issues that need to be solved before intergration of all Synods we can not be part of any restructuring process.The Potchefstroom Deputies put their position clearly to us, they said to us all obstacle will be solved after restruturing. We agreed that Potchefstroom and Midland should go on with the process.

What we mean here is this, If the new General Synod formed by Potchefstroom and Midland churches will see that it is necessary to unite with Soutpansberg,then they will invite us for discussion.

In your munites you said you are willing to talk with Soutpansberg only if you are invited, what do you mean by that?

In your minutes you said you regret that Soutpansberg Deputies did not attend the meeting, does that mean you are not aware that there are some disagreement which occurred in the past?

We do not agree on superficially restructuring, we hope we will have a real church unity where the dignity of blacks will be respected.

RevNefefe (chairperson)"

3.3 There are apparently Churches that deviate from the proposed classification of Classes and Regional Synods for reasons other than those set by the Deputies Art 48 Church Order on 4 June 2007:

3.3.1 Geography

3.3.2 Gifts

3.3.3 Growth points

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.3.3 noted.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Synod should express its opinion on the rationality of deputising twenty elders and twenty ministers to the General Synod.

4.2 The Synod should appoint Deputies for liaising with Synod Soutpansberg. These Deputies should then initiate discussions with Synod Soutpansberg.

4.3 **Name of the Synod:** The Synodal assembly to which the different Regional Synods will delegate from now onwards will be called: General Synod. The place and date on which they meet will be part of the name in each instance.

4.4 **Delegation:** The General Synod 2009 condones and confirms the current manner of delegation to the General Synod, namely that the current seven Regional Synod each delegate 20 ministers and 20 elders. These numbers will be maintained for the next General Synod. It is essential that the delegates should represent all the churches who gather in the Synod.

4.5 **Deputies for further completion of matters:** The General Synod appoints the following groups of Deputies (It is important that persons from the different previous National Synods should be appointed as well):

4.5.1 Deputies: Matters of Church Governance

4.5.1.1 Assignment

4.5.1.1.1 To evaluate which Church Order articles are affected by the decision to gather in a new manner in majority assemblies (for instance CO, art 29) and to make recommendations to the next Synod pertaining to the necessary changes to the Church Order.

4.5.1.1.2 To evaluate whether there are any clashes between previous decisions of Synod Midlands and National Synod Potchefstroom (for instance changes that the GKSA Potchefstroom brought to the Church Order that have not yet been approved by the General Synod) and to advise the next General Synod on this matter.

4.5.1.1.3 To indicate the CO amendments by way of footnotes to the CO and the English translation until Synod has decided on each change.

4.5.2 Deputies: Effective assembly of the General Synod

4.5.2.1 Assignment: To attend to the following matters, while relevant decisions of the previous GKSA Synods on the new unity are taken into account.

4.5.2.1.1 To be a forum where all matters can be discussed so that the unity reflected in the General Synod can be strengthened and confirmed. All matters that can be viewed as growing pains have to be attended to. (Matters brought to the attention of this Commission, will be handed over to the Deputies at the end of this Synod.)

4.5.2.1.2 To pay attention to how the unity and welfare of the churches can be best served within the new arrangements.

4.5.2.1.3 To see how greater participation and involvement of all churches can be attained within the context of diversity.

4.5.2.1.4 To in general look at a more streamlined method for paying attention to Synod matters without the formation of a bottleneck by the end of the Synod so that hurried decisions are taken.

4.5.3 Deputies: CO, art 48

4.5.3.1 Assignments

4.5.3.1.1 To attempt to persuade Synod Soutpansberg to negotiation in terms of CO, art 48.

4.5.3.1.2 To, in cooperation with the Deputies Ecumenical Matters, request the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland* (CGKN) and the *Christian Reformed Churches North America* (CRCNA) to act as advisors during the planned negotiations.

Motivation: Both these churches historically have close ties with both the churches of the National Synod Soutpansberg and the General Synod Potchefstroom.

4.5.3.1.3 To, if Synod Soutpansberg agrees to negotiation, suggest the following as a possible Agenda for such a discussion:

- (i) Any matters that cloud the relationship between the General Synod and Synod Soutpansberg.
- (ii) Theological Training.
- (iii) The road to reconciliation on congregational level.

Decision: Point 4.1 to 4.5.3.1.3 are approved.

4.5.4 A letter to Synod Soutpansberg

Synod decides that a letter be addressed to Synod Soutpansberg with the following content:

The Deputies Correspondence,
Synod Soutpansberg
Beloved Brothers in Jesus Christ,
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN DEPUTIES OF THE GENERALY SYNOD AND SYNOD
SOUTPANSBERG

The General Synod gathered in January 2009 with delegates from the resorts of the previous Synods Potchefstroom and Midlands. It was a joy to gather in such a manner and to experience the unity in Christ. We thank the Lord for his blessing and guidance that the Gereformeerde Kerke in SA could take this important step.

However, we missed the churches from Synod Soutpansberg and express our sadness and regret that there are still matters that keep you from gathering with us.

It was reported with sadness at the General Synod that your Deputies CO, art 48 did not participate in the negotiations with the aim of restructuring the majority assemblies. The General Synod takes note that there are still matters from the past (you call them "key issues") that stand in the way of unity.

We also take note with gratitude that the door for discussions with Synod Soutpansberg is open.

It has been noted with concern that there is loveless behaviour on congregational level between congregations of Synod Soutpansberg and congregations within the resort of the National Synod. Also, that Soutpansberg prefers theological training in Pretoria above the GK training in Potchefstroom.

It is of utmost importance that the two Synods enter into discussion. We see it as the only way in which the uncertainty regarding the relationship between Soutpansberg and our congregations, as well as the General Synod, can be overcome. We therefore request urgently that you agree to a CO, art 48 discussion. The General Synod decided that they will ask the CGKN and CRCNA to send delegates to advise us in this discussion. The Agenda for the meeting can be determined with you. At this stage we find that the following matters deserve urgent attention:

1. Any matters that cloud the relationship between the General Synod and Synod Soutpansberg.

2. Theological Training.

3. The road to reconciliation on congregational level.

We trust that you will react positively to this invitation. Due to its urgency we request that you answer no later than June 2009.

Your brothers in Christ,

.....

Deputies CO, Art 48, General Synod 2009.

Decision: The letter to Synod Soutpansberg is approved and it is referred to the Deputies to also address a letter to Classis Tshwane in consultation with Classis Krokgedilrivier. Prof Peels states the following for the letter, and it is approved: "It is our deep longing to recover the good relations between you and us, and we want to remove all obstacles from our side. We want to discuss with you a mutual vision for the future of the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika."

4.5.5 That a copy of the letter to Soutpansberg be sent with the request to the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland* (CGKN) and the *Christian Reformed Churches North America* (CRCNA).

4.5.6 That a notice regarding the intended discussion with Soutpansberg be sent to all the congregations in Classis Capricorn in order to inform them. This letter should also encourage them towards reconciliatory behaviour.

4.5.7 That these Deputies pay attention to the problems that are mentioned in the Point of Description of Regional Synod Bushveld (20.9), which has been approved.

4.5.8 All the churches involved are called to serious humiliation and prayer for the relationships on personal, congregational and synodal level, for reconciliation between believers and for guidance in discussions.

Decision: Approved as amended – changes already included – Deputies Acta.