

20.9 POINT FOR DISCUSSION : SYNOD BOSVELD TO TAKE STEPS TO NORMALISE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SYNOD SOUTPANSBERG (Artt 49, 285)

- A. Dr EJ de Beer states the Point of Description.
- B. **Decision:** The Point of Description is referred to the Commission for Church Matters: Historical and Church Polity.
- C. Dr WC Opperman reports on behalf of the Commission Church Matters: Historical and Church Polity.

D. POINT OF DISCUSSION

1. Point for discussion

Regional Synod Bosveld requests the National Synod Potchefstroom to take active steps to normalise the relationship with Synod Soutpansberg.

2. Motivation

- 2.1 Synod Potchefstroom (2006) decided to carry on with a unification process with the different Synods (Potchefstroom, Middellande, Soutpansberg, etc.) in the GKSA. Synod Soutpansberg decided not to take part in the process of unification. Since then no synod has taken a decision on the relationship between GKSA (Synod Potchefstroom) and Synod Soutpansberg (see art 46 CO).
- 2.2 The lack of clarity on the relationship between churches who formerly formed part of Synod Soutpansberg and who are still active in the region, and the churches of the current Synod Soutpansberg, causes severe tension between / within congregations of the respective Synods.
- 2.3 Classis Limpopo (which is geographically interwoven with Synod Soutpansberg) cannot on its own decide how the relationship between the GKSA (Synod Potchefstroom) and Synod Soutpansberg is/should be (see art 30 CO).
- 2.4 Out of conversations with the scribe of the art 48 deputies (Synod Potchefstroom and the art 48 Deputies of Synod Soutpansberg) it seems that there is no clarity of the exact nature of the relationship between the two synods (as well as the relationship between congregations in the two synods). On one level there are for example bitter disputes, but on another level there is cooperation in mission work. To which of the two Synods will new converts connect up? On this issue there is already uncertainty in the Pietersburg area.
- 2.5 Congregations in Classis Limpopo ask questions about the theological training of students from Synod Soutpansberg in Pretoria. Is this not an affirmation that the congregations in Synod Soutpansberg are no part of the GKSA?
- 2.6 Congregations in Synod Soutpansberg do not send their statistics to be recorded in the Almanak. Is this an affirmation that Synod Soutpansberg do not regard themselves any longer as part of the GKSA?
- 2.7 It seems as if Synod Soutpansberg is busy founding alternative congregations for the congregations that joined Classis Capricorn.
- 2.8 Synod Soutpansberg recently instated three classes, inter alia in Gauteng. Is this a sign that Synod Soutpansberg does intend to unite with GKSA?
- 2.9 Classis Limpopo has appointed art 48 deputies to converse with the art 48 Deputies of Synod Soutpansberg with the intention to redress the relations between members and congregations. It is difficult to have such conversations where there is no clarity on the official relationship between GKSA (Synod Potchefstroom) and Synod Soutpansberg.

3. Request

That the General Synod resolve clearly what is the relationship of the GKSA with Synod Soutpansberg.

E. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. Argumentation of the Commission

The point of description as well as the oral testimony regarding the uncertainty over relations on congregational level between congregations and members regarding Synod, makes it clear to the commission that immediate attention is necessary.

Since discussions between Synods are arranged by Article 48, it is appropriate that the Synod devotes attention to this matter.

The Synod already had deputies for CO, Art 48. Thus this matter should be mandated to the to be named deputies.

Decision: Noted.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That consequence is given to the point of description.

2.2 That the to be named Deputies Church Order, Article 48, receives the mandate to pay attention to this matter.

Decision: Approved.