

## **15.4 REPORT 4: DIACONAL MATTERS – THE DESTITUTE AND EMERGENCY CONDITIONS (Artt 147, 148)**

- A. Rev MJ Erasmus tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.

### **C. REPORT**

#### **1. Mandate (Acta 2003:147, 2.2.2.1)**

- 1.1 The primary assignment is to work with the deacons of local congregations, also in other Synods, to supply active and ongoing assistance to all people without food, clothing and shelter. In giving the assistance, preference must be given to applications where the destitute are enabled to become self-sufficient to a greater extent.
- 1.2 Investigate emergency situations and conditions within and outside the Republic of South Africa. Obtain information about the needs of fellow believers inside and outside the GKSA and others (Gal 6:10).
- 1.3 Establish and maintain contact with other church organizations, bodies and institutions involved in similar practices of lending assistance.
- 1.4 Supply information and advice to the Churches on relevant assistance.
- 1.5 Commissioned to bring all needs to the attention of churches and deacons and request contributions to the Fund for Emergency Conditions.
- 1.6 As far as possible, contribute to the dispensing of assistance takes place according to the demands of the office of deacon.
- 1.7 Find ways and means to introduce their work to the churches within the resort of the General Synod.
- 1.8 During constitution, appoint someone from their own ranks to send matters to Radio, TV and church newsletters in cooperation and consultation with Deputies for Radio and TV.
- 1.9 Inform churches about their assignment and provide deacons with the appropriate application forms.
- 1.10 Deputies must provide details of the assistance supplied to churches and organizations in their Report to the Synod.

**Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.10 noted.**

#### **2. Matters that the Synod take note of**

- 2.1 During this period, the Deputies annually kept the fund on a fixed amount of R200 000. Once Deputies became aware of emergency situations, letters were directed to the deacons to bring the specific need to their attention.
- 2.2 Matters that have received attention and for which allocations have been made or information supplied (with these allocations Synod instructions were strictly adhered to)
  - 2.2.1 Need due to wildfires in the Northern Cape
  - 2.2.2 Need due to drought in the North
  - 2.2.3 Need due to drought in the Northern Cape
  - 2.2.4 Need due to hail storm at Kwaggafontein
- 2.3 Although we have made this matter of assistance to deacons for emergency assistance known, we receive few applications for assistance out of the emergency fund, while there is a suspicion that the need does exist. The Deputies are necessitated to, in terms of the Synod assignment, themselves enquire as to needs that may exist.

- 2.4 It is clear that
- 2.4.1 Some diaconal chairpersons do not receive post.
- 2.4.2 Deacons give little attention to letters received.
- 2.4.3 The rapid change of deacons also means that continuity is a problem.
- 2.4.4 Lack of knowledge in the processing of matters.

**Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.4.4 noted.**

### **3. Matters that the Synod decide on**

#### Recommendation

That the to-be-appointed Deputies continue with the assignments (pt 1).

**Decision: Approved.**

### **D. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

#### **1. States of Emergency**

- 1.1 Subsequent to the submission of the Report, the Deputies learned of the losses suffered by farmers in the Harrismith district due to veld fires. Funds were immediately made available to the deaconry of GK Harrismith for aid on various fronts. A notice was also sent to all the churches of the GKSA in this regard.
- 1.2 The Deputies Ecumenicity brought the need of the members of the Sudanese Reformed Churches in South Sudan to the attention of the Management of the SDDS in 2014. A notice was circulated among the churches of the GKSA. Funds collected from the churches, i.e. surplus funds not applied for drought relief and a donation from the Christ's Children Foundation in America were made available to the church in South Sudan, facilitated by Rev HPM van Rhyn.

**Decision: Points 1.1 and 1.2 noted.**