

16.19 REPORT 14: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY ABROAD – THE EAST DESK (Artt 61, 68)

- A. Rev HS Coetzee tables the Report and report that the PCK/K's name has changed to Kosin PCK.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.

C. REPORT

Deputies responsible for this desk: Prof SP van der Walt (s) and prof HG Stoker.

1. Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin) (PCK(K))

Ecumenical unity

For notice

1.1 *Mandate*

- 1.1.1 Ecumenical unity is to be reaffirmed and further developed with the PCK (Kosin).
- 1.1.2 The ministry of the Kosin churches in China and adjacent countries is to be prayerfully presented and discretely reported in *Die Kerkblad*.
- 1.1.3 The Deputies are instructed anew to invite post-graduate students from the Kosin churches to study in Potchefstroom. This matter is to be undertaken in cooperation with the Theological School and the Faculty of Theology.

Decision: Points 1.1.1 to 1.1.3 noted.

1.2 *Execution of the mandate*

- 1.2.1 Regular correspondence is being maintained with the PCK.
- 1.2.2 The Deputies attended the PCK's 63rd General Synod, at which greetings from the GKSA was conveyed and the ties of unity in doctrine, service and discipline were reaffirmed. During this visit worthwhile discussions were held with their Deputies about possible post-graduate study for Korean students and the PCK's missionary work in South Africa.

Decision: Points 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 noted.

For decision making

1.3 *Recommendations*

- 1.3.1 The yet to be named Deputies are to reaffirm and further develop ecumenical unity with the PCK.
- 1.3.2 The yet to be appointed Deputies are to be instructed to keep on inviting post-graduate students from the Kosin churches to study in Potchefstroom. This is to be undertaken in cooperation with the Theological School and the Faculty of Theology.
- 1.3.3 The yet to be appointed Deputies are to monitor the PCK's missionary work in South Africa and regularly review this work with them.
- 1.3.4 A Deputy must once again be sent to attend the PCK's Synod in the coming term.

Decision: Points 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 approved.

2. Independent Reformed Churches in Korea (IRCK)

Ecumenical unity

For notice

2.1 *Mandate*

- 2.1.1 Contact with the IRCK is to continue.
- 2.1.2 Follow-up discussions on their need for theological training are to be held.

Decision: Points 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 noted.

2.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Regular contact was made with the IRCK over the course of the term. Unfortunately, discussions during the Deputies visit to South Korea did not materialise.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

2.3 *Recommendations*

2.3.1 Contact with the IRCK should continue.

2.3.2 Follow-up discussions on their need for theological training should be held.

Decision: Points 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 approved.

3. Reformed Church Japan (RCJ)

Ecumenical unity

For notice

3.1 *Mandate*

3.1.1 A Deputy is to be delegated, in the coming term, to attend the RCJ's Synod.

3.1.2 The ecumenical unity in doctrine, services and discipline is to be reaffirmed.

3.1.3 Closer cooperation with the PCK (Kosin), Presbyterian Churches of America (PCA) and OPC that are actively conducting missionary work in Japan is to be sought.

3.1.4 The possibility of sending a missionary to Japan is to be further investigated. Consultation with the mission in Japan is to continue.

Decision: Points 3.1.1 to 3.1.4 noted.

3.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Awaiting an invitation to their annual Synod in October 2014.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

3.3 *Recommendation*

Further information will be provided in a Supplementary Report, subsequent to attending their Synod in October 2014.

Decision: Approved.

4. Sri Lanka – Lanka Reformed Church (LRC)

Ecumenical contact

For notice

4.1 *Mandate*

4.1.1 Contact to be once again sought with relevant institutions in Sri Lanka.

4.1.2 Further contact is to be made with GKN (V) and the WRF about their ministry in Sri Lanka.

Decision: Points 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 noted.

4.2 *Execution of the mandate*

During a visit to the Netherlands, contact with the delegates from Sri Lanka was resumed.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

4.3 *Recommendation*

Contact with the LRC in Sri Lanka should be resumed, kept and further developed.

Decision: Approved.

5. Indonesia

Ecumenical contact

For notice

5.1 *Mandate*

- 5.1.1 The Deputies are to review the state of ecumenical unity with the Reformed Churches in West Timor, by investigating the unity in doctrine, service and discipline between the GKSA and Reformed Churches in West Timor.
- 5.1.2 The Deputies are to consider, together with the TSP, the possibility of involvement in theological training in Java.
- 5.1.3 Cooperation with church communities, with which the GKSA maintains ecumenical unity, is to be sought for the sake of engagement with the churches in Indonesia (see 4.3.3.1). Contact must also be made in this regard with the Reformed Churches in Australia and the Netherlands, since these countries have close ties with Indonesia for geographical and historical reasons.
- 5.1.4 Contact is to be made with the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Jakarta.
- 5.1.5 Correspondence is to be entered into with dr Hardjowasito, the current rector of a theological college in Jakarta.

Decision: Points 5.1.1 to 5.1.5 noted.

5.2 *Execution of the mandate*

- 5.2.1 A visit to Indonesia could not be arranged this term.
- 5.2.2 Contact with these churches continue.

Decision: Points 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 noted.

For decision making

5.3 *Recommendations*

- 5.3.1 The yet to be appointed Deputies should make the Reformed Churches in West Timor a priority in the coming term, by investigating unity in doctrine, service and discipline between the GKSA and the Reformed churches in West Timor.
- 5.3.2 The Deputies should, together with the TSP, investigate the possibility of involvement in theological training in Java.

Decision: Points 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 approved.

6. India

Ecumenical contact

For notice

6.1 *Mandate*

- 6.1.1 Purposeful contact is to be made with the PCA as well as the denominations represented in the ICRC, about the missionary work currently being conducted in India.
- 6.1.2 The Deputies are to arrange a visit to facilitate possible ties and collaboration with Rev Kumar.
- 6.1.3 Regular updates are to be requested from the GK Rietvallei.

Decision: Points 6.1.1 to 6.1.3 noted.

6.2 *Execution of the mandate*

- 6.2.1 Dr DG Breed and prof HG Stoker attended the RCPI's Synod at Derha Dun on 26 October 2013. The RCPI consists of 32 congregations and ascribe to the Westminster Confession. They also accept the three Formularies of Unity. The principal of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, dr Chacko, drew up an exposition of the Reformed Confession in Hindi and Nepalese, according to the question-and-answer method of the HC, aimed at this part of Asia. The RCPI has church unity with the GKN (Vrijgemaakt) and do have historic ties with the PCA, whose missionary work led to the establishment of the northern "Classis". The RCPI are members of the ICRC and the WRF. It would seem that the RCPI takes Scriptural accuracy in training, preaching, decision making, etc. very seriously.

The RPCI's church governance is a combination of the Presbyterian and Reformed governance systems. The RPCI's Synod heeded the advice of the Deputies to seek ecumenical ties with the GKSA.

- 6.2.2 Dr Breed and prof Stoker met with 4 ministers and 10 elders of the Presbyterian Free Church (PFC), in Chhapara, on Tuesday 29 October 2013. This church was founded in 1901 by missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland and also have ecumenical ties with the GKN (Vrijgemaakt) as well as the Free Church of Eastern Australia. PFC is a member of the ICRC. The PFC consists of 4 congregations and have a number of church planting initiatives. They also manage Christian schools (the one in Chhapara has more than 1000 pupils), hospitals and also an orphanage (the home of their first minister, rev Kumar). Their ministers are revs Samit Mishra (Chhapara), Shgam Babu (Lakhnaden), Emmanuel Ekka (Paltar-Vijah Nnga) and S Kihal (Urga Korba).
- 6.2.3 Rev Rajesh Kumar, minister of the GK Rietvallei, was sent to India to proclaim the Gospel and seek out congregations. Dr Breed and prof Stoker visited him and his family; met quite a number of church members and church leaders; led services; met with ministers from a wide variety of denominations and even viewed a possible location for the training of ministers for the Reformed Church of India (RCI). The great need for basic theological training of Christian clergy is clear. In order to aid rev Kumar with church planting and training, attempts are being made to have young men from his congregations come to the TSP for training.

Decision: Points 6.2.1 to 6.2.3 noted.

For decision making

6.3 Recommendations

- 6.3.1 The GKSA should establish ecumenical ties with the RPCI.
- 6.3.2 It should be recommended at the Synod that ecumenical ties be offered to the PFC(CI).
- 6.3.3 The work of rev Kumar, i.e. expanding the Reformed Church in India, should be supported.

Decision: Points 6.3.1 to 6.3.3 approved with a special word of thanks to Reformed Church Rietvallei for the role that they play in this ministry.

7. Turkey

Ecumenical unity

For notice

7.1 Mandate

"The Deputies Ecumenicity: Abroad are instructed to make regular contact with international Reformed church communities, about matters of urgent and common interest in accordance with CO, art 49." The eventual unity of Reformed churches must be viewed our most urgent and important ecumenical calling (cf. Acta 2009:162).

Decision: Noted.

7.2 Execution of the mandate

Dr PJ Buys and prof HG Stoker met the minister of the Protestant Church of Smyrna (Izmir), rev Bocek, during his participation in the WRF's consultation in March 2013 on supporting Reformed Churches in Muslim countries. Dr Stoker visited Izmir in September 2013 and a minister of another of their congregations in the city also attended the meeting. These discussions showed that this denomination carefully follows Scripture and the Reformed Confession.

They are also in the process of translating a range of standard Reformed works into Turkish. This denomination consist of four congregations in Izmir (Smyrna) as well as congregations in Istanbul and Ankara. They are part of the WRF.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

7.3 Recommendation

The Deputies should continue discussions with the protestant churches in Turkey towards collaboration and establishing ecumenical ties.

Decision: Approved.

D. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Reformed Church Japan (RCJ) – Ecumenical unity

For notice

1. Mandate

- 1.1 In the next term of the Deputy's activities a deputy will be delegated to attend a Synod of the RCJ.
- 1.2 The ecumenical unity in doctrine, service and discipline are confirmed as it currently exists and as it is formulated.
- 1.3 Closer cooperation is sought with the PCK (Kosin), PCA and OPC, which is active in missionary work in Japan.
- 1.4 Further attention is given to the possibility to send a missionary to Japan. Cooperation with Mission Japan continues in this matter.

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.4 noted.

2. Execution of assignment

- 2.1 The 69th General Assembly of the RCJ in October 2014 was attended by prof Sarel van der Walt and a greeting message from the GKSA to the RCJ was conveyed.
- 2.2 Note is taken of the decision of the RCJ to also open the two other special services to women, in addition to the service of deacon.
- 2.3 A visit was made at the Theological School of the RCJ in Kobe where a direct invitation was addressed to students to do their degree and postgraduate studies in Potchefstroom. An invitation was also addressed to lecturing staff to consider the NWU for research visits.
- 2.4 Contact was made with the President of the Tokyo Christian University. Exploratory conversations were held regarding the possibility of future cooperation.
- 2.5 Contact was taken up with dr Stephan van der Watt from Mission Japan. Conversations were held regarding the need for closer cooperation and the need of the GKSA to become involved with mission work in Japan.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.5 noted.

For Decision-making

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The GKSA appoints a deputy to attend the synod of the RCJ in 2016 at Sendai when the RCJ celebrates their 70th year of existence.
- 3.2 Ecumenical unity in doctrine, service and discipline are reaffirmed.
- 3.3 That conversation regarding the interpretation of ecumenical unity between the GKSA and the RCJ continues.
- 3.4 The nominated Deputy receives the task to study the Report and decision of the RCJ regarding women in the office of elders and ministers and to make recommendations thereof on how it will influence the relationship between the GKSA and the RCJ. Because of the late stage of the Synod of the RCJ there was not sufficient time to properly study the Report and decision and to give recommendations about this matter at this Synod.

- 3.5 That the nominated deputy facilitates possible cooperation between the GKSA and the Theological School at Kobe, as well as the Christian University at Tokyo.
- 3.6 Methods of missions cooperation between the GKSA and Mission Japan as well as other churches with which the GKSA has ecumenical ties that is active in Japan, are being dedicated to the nominated deputy.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.6 approved.