

## 16.2 REPORT 1: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY INLAND – GENERAL (Artt 26, 230, 248)

- A. Dr DG Breed gives the chair to the deputy-chairperson, rev SD Snyman, after which the latter gives the floor to the reporter, rev PW Kurpershoek.
- B. Rev PW Kurpershoek tables the Report.
- C. **Decision:** Point 3.1.2 and 3.2 – refer to the following ad hoc commission revs MA Modise (s), drr DG Breed, EJ de Beer, revs SA Cilliers, NN Ligege with advisors proff J Smit, R Hobyane and dr PJ Buys to find the most orderly manner in which to further deal with the matter concerning the GKSA and Soutpansberg.
- D. The meeting continues in camera.
- E. Dr EJ de Beer tables the report of the ad hoc commission.
- F. **Decision:** Referred back to the Commission for reformulation.
- G. Dr EJ de Beer tables the report of the ad hoc commission.

### H. REPORT

#### 1. Previous Synod decisions concerning Deputies' mandate

##### 1.1 *To be noted*

- 1.1.1 The multitude of churches is accepted, yet we are not resigned to the fact. The unity of the church as mystic body of Christ is a reality, but the unity of the visible church is a Godly command and calling. From this flows the calling of the church to deal with what keeps apart in a brotherly manner in order to bring together in one church denomination (Acta 1958:879-80, a.2.b).
- 1.1.2 The eventual unity of Reformed Churches must be seen “as our most urgent and important ecumenical calling” (Acta 1970:69).
- 1.1.3 The purpose of the ecumenical discussion is the spreading of the universal gospel through which all churches are called to obedience to the Word of God and as such to one ecumenical community on the basis of correspondence in doctrine (Acta 1994:195, 2.2.1.1; cf. 1967:366).
- 1.1.4 Distinction must be made between the calling to experience unity (churches who are one in doctrine, service, and discipline) that is confined, and the calling to ecumenicity that is unconfined and that goes out to and calls all churches to obedience to the Word of God and mutual fellowship of the believers (Acta 1967:366).
- 1.1.5 Unity of the church does not mean uniformity of local churches. There will necessarily be outward difference, eg. in liturgy and methods of ministry between local churches in different parts of the world (Acta 1997:171, 2.1.1.4).
- 1.1.6 The ecumenical calling is then directed at the “repair of the unity of the church” (Acta 1967:365).
- 1.1.7 In the realisation of the ecumenical calling it does not only deal with the discussion on how church communities can visibly become one, but also prophetic witness for the truth against the lie, as well as co-operation in so far as there is a common task to be fulfilled (Acta 1997:176, 3.2.1).
- 1.1.8 In the light thereof that the GKSA has an unconfined ecumenical calling (Acta 1976:366) and the great necessity of the prophetic calling of the GKSA in South Africa, it is important that the GKSA (amongst others through these Deputies) provide inputs and witnesses with religious organisations, amongst which are the South African Council of Churches and similar organisations (Acta 1997:177, 3.2.3).

##### 1.2 *To be decided: Recommendation*

- 1.2.1 The Synod notes point 1.1.

**Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.2.1 noted.**

## **2. General mandate**

2.1 *Mandate (noted by Synod 2012 cf. Acta 2012:182, 2.3.1-2.3.5)*

2.1.1 The Synod appoints Deputies to hold discussions with inland church communities within the Reformed tradition with a view to ecumenical unity.

2.1.2 One of the Deputies Ecumenicity Government is named as a Deputy Ecumenicity Inland in the interest of necessary liaison.

2.1.3 One of the Deputies Ecumenicity Foreign is named as a Deputy Ecumenicity Inland in the interest of necessary liaison.

2.1.4 The to be named Deputies start new discussions within the framework of van *ecumenical contact*, and continue previously structured discussions within the framework of *ecumenical ties* with a view to *ecumenical unity*.

2.1.5 The Synod budgets for all costs concerning the activities of the Deputies, including the compulsory annual fees of the Convent for Reformatory Churches.

2.2 *To be noted*

2.2.1 Attention was given to all these matters during the term.

2.2.2 During ecumenical events informal discussions were held with representatives of numerous church communities.

2.2.3 In the coming years these informal discussions can develop into more formal bilateral and multilateral discussions.

**Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.2.3 noted.**

2.3 *To be decided: Recommendations*

2.3.1 The Synod appoints Deputies to hold discussions with inland church communities within the Reformed tradition with a view to ecumenical unity.

2.3.2 One of the Deputies Ecumenicity Government is named as a Deputy Ecumenicity Inland in the interest of necessary liaison.

2.3.3 One of the Deputies Ecumenicity Foreign is named as a Deputy Ecumenicity Inland in the interest of necessary liaison.

2.3.4 The to be named Deputies start new discussions within the framework of van *ecumenical contact*, and continue previously structured discussions within the framework of *ecumenical ties* with a view to *ecumenical unity*.

2.3.5 The Synod budgets for all costs concerning the activities of the Deputies, including the compulsory annual fees of the Convent for Reformatory Churches.

**Decision: Points 2.3.1 to 2.3.5 approved.**

## **3. Ecumenical contact with Synod Soutpansberg**

3.1 *Mandate (Acta 2012:518, 3.3)*

3.1.1 Synod 2012 did not give a specific mandate.

**Decision: Noted.**

3.1.2 Yet rev MA Modise and dr PH Heystek were named to the Deputy Group against the background of their involvement with the CO, art 48 Deputies and specifically the relationship GKSA/Synod Soutpansberg.

3.2 *To be noted*

3.2.1 The following correspondence was received via the Administrative Bureau.



*Reformed Churches In South Africa Synod Soutpansberg*

*(Gates of hades shall not overcome it)*

P.O BOX 74 SIBASA 0970 Tel: 0828895435/0844583107 email: iyani@mweb.co.za

Administration Bureau Synod Potchefstroom

2012/04/04

Reformed Churches in South Africa

P. O Box 20004

Noordbrug

2522

Dear Brothers

RE: Your letter dated 7/01/2012

We hereby inform you that Synod Soutpansberg of the Reformed Churches in South Africa took note of your letter dated 7/01/2012 when it considered a report of its Article 48 deputies. Your letter was tabled on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012. We then decided to communicate the following resolutions to you:

1. We sincerely regret that your synod unilaterally decided to terminate discussions with us about the reconstruction of the major assemblies of all the RCSA churches.
2. Synod Soutpansberg found your communication of the 7/01/2012 unclear and ambiguous. We are accordingly kindly asking you to spell out what you consider to be the implications of your decision.
3. Synod Soutpansberg also hereby inform you that it considers your decision concerning your relations with us unfortunate and unacceptable. We accordingly also resolved to prepare a request for a review of your decision at your next synod.
4. We also wish to indicate that we consider ourselves to be what we have always been namely the Reformed Churches in South Africa Synod Soutpansberg. We shall continue to pray and labour for true unity within all the Reformed Churches in South Africa.  
May our gracious God bless you and your work.

Yours in Christ's Service.

Chairperson

Secretary

Rev Dr Liphadzi A.E

Rev Lekalakala M.J

3.2.2 In the light of the sensitivity of the matter, the Deputies decided not to respond to the correspondence.

**Decision: Point 3.1.2 and 3.2 – refer to the following ad hoc commission revs MA Modise (s), drr DG Breed, EJ de Beer, revs SA Cilliers, NN Ligege with advisors proff J Smit, R Hobyane and dr PJ Buys to find the most orderly manner in which to further deal with the matter concerning the GKSA and Soutpansberg.**

3.3 *To be decided: Recommendation*

3.3.1 To note the correspondence from Synod Soutpansberg.

## I. REPORT AD HOC COMMISSION

### 1. Mandate

#### 1. Task

To formulate a reply to the letter by RCSA Soutpansberg and to advise the Synod regarding the way forward.

**Decision: Noted.**

### 2. Reply to RCSA Synod Soutpansberg

The Commission proposes that the Synod replies the letter of RCSA Synod Soutpansberg as follows:

Reformed Churches in South Africa Synod  
Soutpansberg  
PO Box 74  
SIBASA  
0970

Dear brothers

We have received your letter dated 4 April 2012. We gladly respond as follows on your letter:

1. The General Synod of the GKSA (2012) did not take a unilateral to “terminate discussions” with Synod Soutpansberg.

2. General Synod 2012 took the following decision:

“Synod accepts the reality that Synod Soutpansberg and the Reformed Churches in South Africa do not constitute a functional and structural unity”. This decision established the juxtaposition of RCSA Synod Soutpansberg and the GKSA. To elaborate: it is with a sense of humility and great sorrow that the GKSA (Synod 2012) had to accept that RCSA Synod Soutpansberg developed its own structures and functions as an alternative church denomination separate from the GKSA.

The GKSA knows what the Lord’s Word expects of us. Because of the intense pain many members of the GKSA endured and is still enduring, caused by Soutpansberg churches, for example victimization, court cases, intruding in local congregations where GKSA churches are ministering, it is currently very difficult for the GKSA to initiate discussions.

We took note of your e-mail to dr Pieter Heystek (8 September 2014) requesting contact details. We confirm that you send correspondence to dr Hennie Goede of our Deputies Ecumenic Affairs (Inland). His e-mail address is [henniegoede@telkomsa.net](mailto:henniegoede@telkomsa.net)

We courteously remind you that our denomination's name is Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.

Your brothers

**Decision: Approved as amended.**

### **3. Way forward**

- 3.1 The Commission proposes that the GKSA support members and congregations that suffer because of the situation with RCSA Synod Soutpansberg in the following ways:
  - 3.1.1 members are requested to pray continuously for those who suffer as well as all parties involved, also to encourage those who suffer;
  - 3.1.2 the Synod appoints Deputies to support churches who are raising funds to build church buildings, because they no longer have free access to their buildings, raise funds in order to support those churches who no longer have free access to their buildings. The funds are to be used to support congregations to erect buildings in order to serve the Lord unhindered and peacefully. The money will be used where it has become clear that it is not possible to use buildings peacefully.

Motivation:  
The cost of legal action may be R500 000 per case. A positive outcome is not guaranteed. The monetary value of some of the buildings is significantly less than the cost of legal action. In this regard the RC De Hoop and the RC Tshiawelo have, for example, taken the initiative to buy land and to raise funds to build new church complexes.
  - 3.1.3 That the General Synod, as in the past, makes provision to support churches financially who are involved in litigation and/or who are not able to give effect to 3.1.2.
  - 3.1.4 GKSA congregations that support congregations in RCSA Synod Soutpansberg, are requested to take the consequences of their support into account as there is a perception that the support contributes to terrorize members of the GKSA and to impair them in different ways.
  - 3.1.5 That churches with whom the GKSA has ecumenical unity and have an interest in the matter, are suitable informed and requested to intercede in prayer by named Deputies Ecumenicity Abroad".

**Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.1.5 approved (amendment already added – Deputies Acta).**