

## 16.6 REPORT 1: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY ABROAD – GENERAL TASKS (Art 46)

- A. Rev HS Coetzee tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.

### C. REPORT

#### 1. General administrative

##### 1.1 For notice

- 1.1.1 The work was divided into different desks and a Report was submitted for each desk, which also indicated the Deputies responsible for the particular desk.
- 1.1.2 A number of advisers were engaged in the work of the Deputies and deserve thanks for their outstanding contribution, especially those professors who were able to incorporate these duties into other tasks.
- 1.1.3 The Deputies combined visitations, where possible, to save on expenses.
- 1.1.4 All documents attached to this Report are available for input and are stored in the archives for safekeeping.

**Decision: Points 1.1.1 to 1.1.4 noted.**

#### 2. Decisions of previous Synods bearing on the duties of the Deputies

##### 2.1 For notice

- 2.1.1 Deputies Ecumenicity Abroad are instructed to keep in regular contact with Reformed Church communities abroad related to matters of urgent and common interest, as per CO, art 49 (Acta 1997:176, 3.1.1).
- 2.1.2 Ultimately the unity of all Reformed Churches must be deemed *our most urgent and important ecumenical calling* (Acta 1970:69).
- 2.1.3 The aim of the ecumenical discourse is the spreading of the universal Gospel, in which all churches are called to obedience to the Word of God and as such to one church community, in accordance to doctrine (Acta 1994:195, 2.2.1.1; cf. 1967:366).
- 2.1.4 A distinction needs to be drawn between the experiencing of unity (churches that correspond in doctrine, service and discipline) that is finite and the calling to ecumenicity that is infinite, going out to all churches and calls for obedience to the Word of God as well as for community among believers (Acta 1967:366).
- 2.1.5 Unity in the church is not about the sameness of local churches. There will naturally be outward differences, like the liturgy or ministry models of local churches around the world (Acta 1997:171, 2.1.1.4).
- 2.1.6 The ecumenical calling is aimed at restoration of unity within the church (Acta 1967:365).
- 2.1.7 Answering the ecumenical call is, however, not about just discussing how church communities can visibly become one, but also about the prophetic proclaiming of the truth to refute the lie as well as about collaboration on all common matters (Acta 1997:176, 3.2.1).

**Decision: Points 2.1.1 to 2.1.7 noted.**

#### 3. Finances

##### 3.1 Decisions 2012

The Synod has set out the budget for the work of the Deputies as follows:

- 3.1.1 One compulsory collection per year will be set aside by the churches for the execution of the GKSA's ecumenical duties.
- 3.1.2 Travelling expenses (national), daily allowances (national) and other necessary expenses will be paid out of the Synod account.
- 3.1.3 The Synod sets aside one compulsory collection per year for the churches' collective obligation towards the London ministry.
- 3.1.4 The Synod once again allows for the payment of annual membership dues to the ICRC from the Synod account.
- 3.1.5 The Synod allows for a once-off donation from the Synod account, since no annual dues are levied, of R10 000 toward the work of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).
- 3.1.6 The Synod allows from the Synod account for a financial contribution of R10 000 for missionary work coordination.
- 3.1.7 The Synod permits the Deputies to aid delegates of churches financially to attend GKSA Synods, for strengthening of ecumenical ties, should adequate funds be available from collections.

For notice

3.2 *Execution of the work*

- 3.2.1 The financial aspects were managed in accordance to the budget and in consultation with the Administrative Bureau. Sincere thanks is expressed to the churches that enabled this work, through collections and estimates. It is foreseen that the work of the Deputies will continue to be supported in this manner.

**Decision: Points 3.1.1 to 3.2.1 noted.**

Recommendations

The Synod should budget for the work of the Deputies as follows:

- 3.2.2 Member churches are to set aside one compulsory collection per year for the execution of the GKSA's ecumenical duty.
- 3.2.3 Travelling expenses (national), daily allowance (national) and other necessary expenses are to be paid out of the Synod account.
- 3.2.4 Member churches are to set aside one compulsory collection per year to meet the collective obligation toward the London ministry.
- 3.2.5 The Synod is to once again allow for the annual membership dues to ICRC and also for a delegation to the ICRC event from the Synod account.
- 3.2.6 The Synod is to allow for a once-off donation from the Synod account, since no annual dues are levied, of R15 000 in support of the work of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).
- 3.2.7 The Synod is to allow, from the Synod account, for a financial contribution of R10 000 toward missionary work coordination.
- 3.2.8 The Synod is to permit the Deputies to aid delegates of churches financially to attend GKSA Synods, for strengthening of ecumenical ties, should adequate funds be available from collections.

**Decision: Points 3.2.2 to 3.2.8 approved.**

**4. Introductory brochure of the GKSA**

4.1 *Mandate*

The brochure is to be updated and printed. It was decided against a DVD, due to the high cost.

**Decision: Noted.**

For notice

#### 4.2 *Execution of the work*

The brochure was updated and distributed, where deemed necessary. It was also made available in electronic form.

**Decision: Noted.**

#### For decision making

#### 4.3 *Recommendations*

4.3.1 The brochure is to be kept up to date and distributed, where deemed necessary.

**Decision: Approved.**

### 5. **General instructions**

#### 5.1 *Mandate*

5.1.1 Contact is to be made with churches that correspond to the GKSA in doctrine, service and discipline to promote ecumenical ties and unity (CO, art 85).

5.1.2 Minor differences should not stand in the way of ecumenical unity.

5.1.3 The practical import of ecumenicity is to be established in matters like: attestation and calling; invitation to each other's Synods; and input into each other's decisions.

5.1.4 The meaning of ecumenicity is to be explained in terms of specific matters in, for example, *Die Kerkblad* and brief overviews to Church Councils.

5.1.5 The Deputies are to formulate the GKSA's concept of ecumenical unity (church correspondence) and reach consensus in this regard with the Deputies of church communities, with which the GKSA are in correspondence.

5.1.6 The Deputies are to have the relevant decisions of Synod 2009 translated into English and distribute it to all the church communities with which the GKSA is in correspondence. This has been allowed for in the Synod's budget.

5.1.7 One of the Deputies is to facilitate contact with Deputies Ecumenicity Inland.

**Decision: Points 5.1.1 to 5.1.7 noted.**

#### For notice

#### 5.2 *Execution of the work*

5.2.1 All matters received continuous attention during ecumenical discussions and contact.

5.2.2 The decisions of Synod 2012 were electronically distributed to the churches with which the GKSA has ecumenical ties.

5.2.3 An e-mail address was created at the Administrative Bureau for processing of correspondence from international churches. This address is [adminburo@gksa.co.za](mailto:adminburo@gksa.co.za)

5.2.4 One or two articles featured in *Die Kerkblad*, but this will have to receive greater attention.

**Decision: Points 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 noted.**

#### For decision making

#### 5.3 *Recommendations*

5.3.1 Contact is to be made with churches that correspond to the GKSA in doctrine, service and discipline where it may promote ecumenical ties and unity (CO, art 85).

5.3.2 The practical import of ecumenicity is to be established in matters like: attestation and calling; invitation to each other's Synods; and input into each other's decisions.

5.3.3 The meaning of ecumenicity is to be explained in terms of specific matters in, for example, *Die Kerkblad* and brief overviews to Church Councils.

5.3.4 The Deputies are to share the GKSA's concept of ecumenical unity (church correspondence) and reach consensus, as far as possible, about such concepts with church communities with which the GKSA are united.

- 5.3.5 The Deputies are to communicate relevant decisions of Synod 2015 to church communities with which the GKSA have ties and unity.
- 5.3.6 One of the Deputies is facilitate contact with Deputies Ecumenicity Inland.
- 5.3.7 GKSA ministers who have taken up callings overseas must be visited by the GKSA Deputies, whenever possible.
- 5.3.8 International guests must, as of 2018, be received two days prior to the Synod for discussion and relationship building. During the first two days of the Synod, the delegates will receive the opportunity to convey greetings and may then decide whether to remain for the rest of the Synod.

**Decision: Points 5.3.1 to 5.3.8 approved.**