

The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

Acts of the 41st Synod

of the

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

convened by the FRC Mamelodi

22-26 September 2024



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**DELEGATES AND ADVISORS TO SYNOD MAMELODI 2024
OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA**



Seated from left to right:

Rev. PG Boon, Rev. J Bruintjies, Rev. HH van Alten, Br. FJ van der Meer, Br. D Mogotsi.

Standing from left to right:

Rev. P Kgatle, Rev. G Bruintjies, Rev. J Temple, Rev. DM Boersma, Rev. H Breytenbach,
Rev. D Poppe, Rev. GF Mnisi, Rev. J van der Linden, Rev. JR Visser, Rev. J de Beer.

CONTENTS

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT WWW.FRC.ORG.ZA OR WWW.VGK.ORG.ZA.	1
DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE WITH THE STATED CLERK, TO BE OBTAINED ON REQUEST	2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	3
ARTICLE 1: PRAYER SERVICE 22 September 2024	5
ARTICLE 2: OPENING OF SYNOD 23 September 2024.....	5
ARTICLE 3A: WORD OF WELCOME TO SYNOD	6
ARTICLE 3B: PRACTICAL INHOUSE ARRANGEMENTS	6
ARTICLE 4: CREDENTIALS	6
ARTICLE 5: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD MAMELODI.....	7
ARTICLE 6: AGREEMENT WITH THREE FORMS OF UNITY .	7
ARTICLE 7: ADOPTION OF AGENDA.....	7
ARTICLE 8: ADOPTION OF MEETING PROCEDURES	8
ARTICLE 9: APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES & DEPUTIES	8
ARTICLE 10: ACCEPTANCE AND ADMISSIBILITY OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED	9
ARTICLE 11: DEPUTIES FOR RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD (DRCA)	9
ARTICLE 12: OPENING - 24 September 2024	21

ARTICLE 13: DEPUTIES FOR CONTACTS WITH CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (DCCSA)	21
ARTICLE 14: DEPUTIES BIBLE TRANSLATION	31
ARTICLE 15: DEPUTIES FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC	36
ARTICLE 16: DEPUTIES INTERNET	42
ARTICLE 17: MISSION DEPUTIES SOUTH AFRICA	44
ARTICLE 18: DEPUTIES ART 49 CO - CLASSIS SOUTH AND CLASSIS NORTH	47
ARTICLE 19: DEPUTIES CLASSIS SOUTH DAY OF PRAYER	48
ARTICLE 20: OPENING – 25 September 2025.....	48
ARTICLE 21: DEPUTIES ART 11 NEEDY CHURCHES	49
ARTICLE 22: DEPUTIES FOR LITURGICAL FORMS AND FORM PRAYERS	55
ARTICLE 23: DEPUTIES STATED CLERK AND ARCHIVE... ..	57
ARTICLE 24: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING	60
ARTICLE 25: DEPUTIES ART 19 CO NEEDY STUDENTS	65
ARTICLE 26: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING (continued)	69
ARTICLE 27: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING (continued)	69
ARTICLE 28: OPENING AND WELCOME – 26 September 2024.....	74
ARTICLE 29: DEPUTY TREASURER.....	74
ARTICLE 30: DEPUTY TREASURER (continued)	76

ARTICLE 31: DEPUTIES INSPECTION OF THE TREASURER	78
ARTICLE 32: MISSION DEPUTIES (continued)	78
ARTICLE 33: DEPUTIES ART 11 (continued).....	79
ARTICLE 34: DEPUTIES FOR INSPECTION OF THE ARCHIVE	79
ARTICLE 35: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING (continued)	80
ARTICLE 36: LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT AND MAYOR OF TSHWANE.....	80
ARTICLE 37: APPOINTMENTS	80
ARTICLE 38: PERSONAL QUESTION PERIOD	84
ARTICLE 39: ART 48 QUESTION PERIOD.....	84
ARTICLE 40: APPROVAL OF PRESS RELEASE	84
ARTICLE 41: APPROVAL AND PRINTING OF SYNOD ACTS	84
ARTICLE 42: THANKSGIVINGS	84
ARTICLE 43: CLOSING DEVOTION	85
ARTICLE 44: CLOSING OF SYNOD	85
ADDENDUM 1: REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION OF CREDENTIALS.....	86
ADDENDUM 2: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE FRCA..	88
ADDENDUM 3: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE CANRC	92

ADDENDUM 4: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN (GK).....	97
ADDENDUM 5: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE RCSA (GKSA).....	100
ADDENDUM 6: PRESS RELEASE SYNOD MAMELODI OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES SA 2024	103

**DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT
WWW.FRC.ORG.ZA OR WWW.VGK.ORG.ZA.**

DRCA Report to Synod Mamelodi 2024 complete 2
Synod2024 - DCCSA report
Synod2024 - DCCSA Supplementary report
Report of Deputies Bible Translation
Report Deputies Liturgical Music 2021-2024
Appendix to Report Lit Music
Deputies for Inspection of the Archive report to Synod 2024 (22 Mar 2024)
Deputies Liturgical - Report to FRC Synod 2024
20190307 - Deputate Liturgiese formuliere en gebede kommer oor Vernuwing
Liturgical Forms & Form Prayers - Addendum
Report Dep Stated Clerk for Synod 2024 v2
Report Deputy Day of Prayer to Synod Mamelodi September 2024
MDSA Synod Report 2024 - V1.0
Deputies Theological Training report to synod 2024 final version v2
Add to Dep TT 2024-04 MoU with SA - Draft update
Add to Dep TT COR15.1C signed MH
Deputies Art 19 report to synod 2024
Add to Dep Art 19 CO
2024 Deputies ad art. 49 - Classis North - Report to Synod Mamelodi 2024
Kwestor Sinode verslag 2024
Article 11 Report for FRC Synod 2024 (002)
Art 49 deputies Classis South Report to Synod 2024
Deputies Theological Training report to synod 2024 amendment 05072024
2024 06 21 VGK Maranata aan Deputate Buitelandse Kerke
Deputies Art 19 report to synod 2024 Amendment 17072024

Addendum Report Stated Clerk 2024
Addendum Report DRCA Mamelodi July 2024
Synod 2024 Internet v5
Letter FRC Pretoria regarding Report Dep Lit Forms
Synod Treasurer Audit 2023
Presentation GKN for Synod FRCSA
Letters to the President of South Africa and Mayor of Tshwane

**DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE WITH THE STATED CLERK, TO
BE OBTAINED ON REQUEST**

Report of Deputies Article 49 CO – Classis North.
Report of Deputies Article 49 CO – Classis South.
Credentials of all delegates

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APK	Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk
ART 11	Deputies Needy Churches
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BDV 2020	Bybel Direkte Vertaling 2020
BOP	Book of Praise
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
CJBF	Calvyn Jubileum Boeke Fonds
CO	Church Order
CRCA	Christian Reformed Churches Australia
CRTS	Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary
DTT	Deputies Theological Training
DCCSA	Deputies for Contacts with Churches in South Africa
DGK	De Gereformeerde Kerken
DRCA	Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad
DRCA	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRCSA	Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
DVN	De Verre Naasten
FCSA	Free Church in Southern Africa
FRC	Free Reformed Church
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCSA	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
FSBF	Foreign Student Bursary Fund
GK	Gereformeerde Kerken
GKN	Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland
GKSA	Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
LS	The Lord's Supper
MDiv	Master of Divinity
MDSA	Mission Deputies South Africa
NGK	Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken
NGKA	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika

NGKSA	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika
NPC	Non-Profit Company
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
RCNL	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated)
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RCSA	Reformed Churches in South Africa
REACH	Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa
RSC	Reformational Study Centre
RTA/GTA	Reformed Theological Academy / Gereformeerde Theologiese Akademie
URCNA	United Reformed Churches North America
ZAM	Zuid-Afrika Mission

ACTS OF THE 41ST SYNOD OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA CONVENED BY THE FRC MAMELODI FROM 22 – 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

ARTICLE 1: PRAYER SERVICE 22 September 2024

A prayer service was held in the FRC Mamelodi. Rev. HH van Alten preached the gospel from Mark 11: 1-26.

The church of Christ must look up from all her activities and expect everything from her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who will turn our barrenness into bearing fruit for his kingdom and for his glory.

We sing Lifela tsa Sione 354, Psalm 43: 3 & 4, Hymn 52 and Ps 118: 7 & 8 and several Sotho choruses. In prayer we ask the Lord for his blessing on the work of Synod. Confession of our faith in Christ is done by reciting the Nicene Creed.

After the service, the sisters of Mamelodi served the attendees with refreshments to be enjoyed with our common fellowship.

ARTICLE 2: OPENING OF SYNOD 23 September 2024

Missionary of the mission church in Nellmapius, Rev. GF Mnisi opens the meeting of Synod by reading 1 Corinthians 1.

Although there were many problems in Corinth, the congregation was still a congregation of Christ. It is Christ who establishes his church. God called Paul to his service because he had many children in the wicked city of Corinth. Christ was the centre of his preaching as is seen in the first ten verses. There was resistance against Paul, but the planting of the church was the seal of Christ

on his apostleship. Paul did not do all of this in his own power but by the power and grace of God. He took confidence in Christ.

Paul did aftercare and instructed the congregation to become more obedient to the Lord. The congregation of Corinth, as well as the church today locally and internationally are sanctified by the preaching of the gospel and the mutual and formal admonition.

We sing Hymn 40: 1, 2, 4 and 5 and Rev. Mnisi leads us in prayer and asks God for his blessings on the work of Synod.

ARTICLE 3A: WORD OF WELCOME TO SYNOD

On behalf of the Free Reformed Church Mamelodi elder Donald Mogotsi speaks a hearty word of welcome to all attendees. He also thanks the church of Pretoria-Maranata for hosting the daily meetings of Synod.

ARTICLE 3B: PRACTICAL INHOUSE ARRANGEMENTS

Practical arrangements are laid out by Rev. PG Boon, pastor of the FRC Pretoria-Maranata. This included movement in and out of the building, security measures, emergency exits, a meeting room for committee work and restroom facilities.

ARTICLE 4: CREDENTIALS

The report of the Stated Clerk on the credential letters of both Classis North and Classis South as well as the credential letters of the delegates of the CanRC and the FRCA are read and accepted. (Addendum 1)

A credential letter from Rev. Rob Visser from the Reformed Churches Netherlands is accepted.

As advisors are accepted to Synod Rev. P Kgatle, Rev. H Breytenbach and Rev. JR Visser.

ARTICLE 5: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD MAMELODI

The following brothers are elected as the officers of Synod 2024 by way of secret ballot:

- Chair: Rev. HH van Alten
- Deputy Chair: Rev. J Bruintjes
- Scribe: Br. FJ van der Meer

The meeting is adjourned for the newly elected officers to prepare for their task as Moderamen of Synod. The newly elected officers take up their seats and the Synod is formally constituted by the chair.

ARTICLE 6: AGREEMENT WITH THREE FORMS OF UNITY

All delegates confirm their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by standing up.

ARTICLE 7: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The proposed agenda received from the stated Clerk is accepted by Synod. It is proposed and accepted that greeting messages from our sister churches will be scheduled during the discussion of the report from DRCA.

The understanding is that changes to the schedule may happen when certain matters are dealt with in less than the allocated time. Certain sessions are specifically scheduled for local or overseas representatives to be present via the internet.

ARTICLE 8: ADOPTION OF MEETING PROCEDURES

Deputy reports will first be presented by representatives of the appointed deputies. Then delegates from our sister churches and other churches will be given the opportunity to give their greeting messages.

The report will be dealt with via discussion by the Synod delegates and advisors. If no decision can be reached, the Moderamen will formulate a proposal. All discussions will be recorded.

Appointment of committees can also be done. A committee will be appointed to review a matter and advise the meeting or propose a decision for adoption by Synod.

When big decisions are to be made Synod will ask the help of God in prayer.

ARTICLE 9: APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES & DEPUTIES

1. Committee: Budgets

In connection with budgets from Mission Deputies SA, Art 11 CO Needy Churches, Deputies Theological Training and Art 19 CO Needy Students, a committee is appointed with the task to:

- Consolidate budgets
- Consolidate streams of income
- Consolidate streams of outflow
- Make a proposal for the distribution of funds

Br. Ronald Meeske (convenor), Rev. George Mnisi, Rev. Jaco de Beer, Br. Bert Veenendal and Rev. DM Boersma are appointed to the committee. If possible, feedback will be given by Tuesday evening.

2. Appointment of Deputies

To prepare a proposal for the appointment of new deputies for the period from 2024-2027, Rev. PG Boon and Rev. J Bruintjes are appointed.

ARTICLE 10: ACCEPTANCE AND ADMISSIBILITY OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

All reports and addendums from deputies, and letters from church councils are accepted as admissible by Synod.

ARTICLE 11: DEPUTIES FOR RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD (DRCA)

An addendum report was also sent to Synod. The recommendations and grounds in the addendum report were used as basis to come to decisions.

ARTICLE 11.1: FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

Report

Deputy Rev. J Bruintjes gives an overview of Deputies' report in connection with the FRCA.

Greeting message FRCA: Br. Bert Veenendal, deputy for Relations with Churches Abroad, gives a greeting message on behalf of the FRCA (Addendum 2). Rev. J Bruintjes replies with appreciation to the FRCA. He then leads us in prayer for the FRCA and thanks the Lord for this relationship.

Deliberations

The FRCA appreciates the transparency and feedback received from Deputies Theological Training. If financial contributions are

made to other deputyships, then feedback must also be given to the donors.

Synod decides:

1. To continue the sister church relationship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), according to the adopted rules.
2. To authorize DRCA to send one delegate to the next FRCA synod at Mundijong, WA, in 2027 and to instruct the delegate to convey our greetings, to give a presentation on the FRCSA if requested, and to promote cooperation.
3. To support the FRCA in forging closer contact with the ICRC.
4. To provide regular feedback to the churches on developments within the FRCA.

Grounds

1. The FRCA give evidence of continued faithfulness to the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.
2. Personal contacts are an effective means of developing, maintaining and expanding good sister church relations.
3. Both the FRCA and the FRCSA are small church federations with a similar background and sharing similar challenges. By praying for each other, maintaining good contacts and learning from each other, both federations will be better equipped to fulfil their God-given task to remain faithful churches of Christ in a secular world.
4. Synod Darling Downs 2024 of the FRCA has decided to send observers to the next two General Meetings of the ICRC to get a better knowledge of the reformed character of the ICRC. Sister churches of the FRCA which are ICRC members, like the

FRCSA, should support them when requested and where possible.

ARTICLE 11.2: AUSTRALASIA - ASIA REGION

Synod decides:

To instruct the DRCA to remain informed about ecclesiastical developments in the Australasia - Asia region, mainly via the FRCA and the ICRC.

Ground:

According to the policy adopted by Synod Bethal 2000, the FRCSA should focus on our own region. It is better to leave more intensive contacts related to the Reformed churches in the Australasia and Asia region to the FRCA, while the activities of the ICRC offer opportunities for direct contacts.

ARTICLE 11.3: CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES (CanRC)

Report

Deputy Rev. J Bruintjes gives an overview of Deputies' report in connection with the CanRC.

Greeting message CanRC: Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes, deputy for Relations with Churches Abroad, gives a greeting message on behalf of the CanRC. (Addendum 3)

Rev. DM Boersma replies with appreciation to the CanRC. He then leads us in prayer for the CanRC and thanks the Lord for this relationship.

Deliberations

The use of Bible translations is not prescribed by the CanRC Synod. There is no perfect translation. The following translations are used within the bond of churches: English Standard Version (ESV), New International Version (NIV) 2011 and the New King James Version (NKJV).

Synod decides:

1. To continue the sister church relationship with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (CanRC), according to the adopted rules.
2. To send a delegate to Synod Aldergrove in 2025 and to instruct the delegate to convey our greetings, to give a presentation on the FRCSA if requested, and to promote cooperation.
3. To instruct DRCA to provide regular feedback to the churches on developments within the CanRC.

Grounds:

1. The CanRC give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, the Reformed confessions, and the Church Order.
2. Personal visits are an effective means of developing, maintaining and expanding good sister church relations.
3. Both the CanRC and the FRCSA are church federations with a similar background and share similar challenges. By maintaining good contacts and learning from each other, both church federations will be better equipped to fulfil their God-given task to remain faithful churches of Christ in a secular world.
4. We have benefited greatly from CRTS as a centre for theological training.

ARTICLE 11.4: NORTH AMERICAN REGION

Synod decides:

To instruct the DRCA to remain informed about ecclesiastical developments in North America, mainly via the CanRC and the ICRC.

Ground:

According to the policy adopted by Synod Bethal 2000, the FRCSA should focus on our own region. It is better to leave more intensive contacts related to Reformed churches in North America to the CanRC, while the activities of the ICRC offer opportunities for direct contacts.

ARTICLE 11.5: GENERAL

Synod decides:

1. To discharge the present Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad (DRCA) and to appoint new deputies for the period until the next Synod.
2. To appoint the following brothers and sister as DRCA committee for the 2024–2027 period: Rev. J Bruintjes, Sr. D van den Linden, Br. JF Raimond and Br. G Klapwijk (as convenor), as well as Rev. P Kgatle and Rev. PG Boon (both for the ICRC), all as continuing members of the previous deputies, except for Br. Klapwijk and Sr. van der Linden.
3. To instruct the DRCA to submit an interim progress report for information and discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.
4. To instruct the DRCA to report to the next Synod and formulate recommendations according to Art. 10 and Art 11 of the Synod Rules.

Grounds:

1. Continuity within the DRCA is important to maintain active sister church relationships and to stay aware of each other's ecclesiastical developments.
2. The DRCA activities require a profound interest in church matters and good communication and reporting skills.
3. The activities of the ICRC become increasingly prominent in our international ecclesiastical relationships. Many of its activities are related to mission work. Therefore, the task to stay actively involved in the ICRC requires a strong missionary representation in the DRCA.

ARTICLE 11.6: LIAISON WITH THE CHURCHES**Synod decides:**

To instruct the DRCA:

1. To provide the church councils with appropriate information regarding churches abroad.
2. To facilitate contacts of other FRCSA deputies with sister churches when needed.
3. To coordinate contacts and requests of the FRCSA churches with churches abroad.

Grounds:

1. The work of the DRCA is only useful for the churches (who carry the costs) if regular information and feedback is given to the churches. There is an ongoing need for liaising and sharing of information, while the DRCA continuously gather information regarding churches abroad.
2. Other deputies and churches should keep the deputies informed where they receive support from and have formal agreements

with churches abroad. Information on this matter should also be shared at Indabas.

3. Coordination of the various contacts with our sister churches is beneficial to all.

13:00-14:00 LUNCH

ARTICLE 11.7: CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Report

Deputy Rev. J Bruintjes gives an overview of Deputies' report in connection with the GKN & DGK.

Greeting message GKN/DGK: Delegate Rev. Rob Visser gives a greeting message on behalf of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Addendum 4) and appeals strongly to the FRCA to offer a formal sister church relationship.

Deliberations

There is fluidity in the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have formal contact with SERK (Germany) and the OPC (USA). The churches have formal contacts on deputy level with:

- Two churches (Capelle ad IJssel-Noord and Urk), who separated from the RCNL.
- Some Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken).
- Some Hersteld Hervormde Kerken.

There is contact with the “Kerngroep Bezinning” who consists of individual pastors and members from the previous RCNL.

The churches are formally involved in the Reformed Theological Seminary in Germany where Dr. Victor d'Assonville, who was sent by RCSA (Postmasburg), is the principal.

The Gerefomeerde Kerken is in the frontline struggle within the current secular Dutch society to stay a true church of Christ.

FRCA and CanRC deputies also give input to the discussion. They are slowly but surely moving in the direction of full ecclesiastical relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

The letter of the Free Reformed Church of Pretoria-Maranata to deputies was also considered by Synod

Decision

Synod decides to give the new deputies the following mandate:

1. To express gratitude for the unification of the GKN and DGK under the name of Gereformeerde Kerken (GK).
2. To praise the LORD for the deep unity of faith that we share with the GK.
3. To mandate DRCA to send a delegate to the first official synod of the GK 2026 with the intention of extending full sister church relationship, ideally simultaneously with the CanRC and the FRCA.
4. In the meantime, to advise consistories, in cases where members from the GK come to South Africa, to allow them as members or guests at the Lord's Supper, should they make such a request.
5. To inform the GK in writing regarding these decisions concerning them.

6. To maintain contact with the “Kerngroep Bezinning” and specifically to stimulate them with progress towards unification with the GK.
7. To monitor developments in the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, especially in seeking unity with the GK.
8. To coordinate with deputies from the CanRC and the FRCA regarding developments within and between the GK, CGK and other Reformed groups in the Netherlands.

Grounds

1. The GK (formerly DGK and GKN) have expressed their commitment to the Word of God as reflected in the Three Forms of Unity.
2. Members of the GK were in a sister church relation with us while they were part of the RCNL and left because they wished to remain Reformed. This urges us to pursue a sister church relationship.
3. The GK have scheduled a joint extraordinary synod, Lord willing on 5 October 2024, to finalize and formalize the church federation.
4. The GK have appealed to the FRCSA to stand with them in their desire to remain a faithful Reformed church in the Dutch context.
5. The first official synod of the GK churches will be held in 2026. It will be a blessing to share and visibly show the unity that we have in Christ in the Netherlands, possibly with the CanRC and FRCA.
6. The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands are going through a period of crisis, and circumstances are fluid.

7. There are still churches that are looking for a federational home in the Netherlands.
8. The efforts of the “Kerngroep Bezinning” and independent reformed churches seeking to remain confessionally reformed, are worthy of the support of our churches.
9. Our sister churches (the CanRC and the FRCA) are in a similar position with regard to developments in the Netherlands and therefore we should aim for a joint approach.

ARTICLE 11.8: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ICRC)

Report

Deputy Rev. PG Boon gives an overview of Deputies’ report in connection with the ICRC.

Deliberations

How can we improve our knowledge of other ICRC churches? If our focus is on Africa, what are we doing in Africa?

Personal connection is very important. After personal contact is made, online contact is much easier. The importance of regional conferences is also stressed.

There are ICRC churches in Uganda, Congo, Kenya and Sudan. Mission work is done in Africa by the OPC and other churches. Hopefully we can contact them at the regional conference in Cape Town in October 2024.

Synod decides:

To instruct the DRCA:

1. To continue active membership of the ICRC and participate in their Working Groups, where relevant to our churches.
2. To use the upcoming Africa Regional Conference of the ICRC in Bellville, from 23 to 27 October 2024, to become more familiar with Reformed and Presbyterian churches in Africa and to stimulate future contacts.
3. To budget R10000 for the Regional Conference in Bellville in October 2024.
4. To maintain contact with African ICRC member churches and to find ways to support the proclamation of the Word of God and leadership training by those churches in their home countries, in cooperation with other ICRC member churches.
5. To remain in contact with the ICRC member churches concerning future African regional conferences.
6. To coordinate the efforts of the FRCSA and RCSA concerning regional ICRC activities.
7. To raise the ICRC profile within the FRCSA by providing regular feedback to the churches on ICRC activities and articles published in *Lux Mundi*, e.g. through a *DRCA Newsletter* or through *Kompas*.
8. To send two delegates to the next international ICRC General Meeting, scheduled for 2026 in South Korea, yet only budget for one.

Grounds:

1. The ICRC is an organization which adheres to and promotes Reformed principles.

2. The FRCSA have a responsibility to promote the proclamation of the Gospel wherever reasonably possible.
3. The ICRC provides a platform to maintain contacts with Reformed churches all over the world and to stimulate Reformed theological thinking and practice.
4. Contacts with churches in Africa should mainly be made through the ICRC or sister churches. This is in line with the policy adopted by Synod Bethal 2000, for the FRCSA to focus on our own region.
5. The ICRC provides opportunities to advance our mission activities in promoting the proclamation of the Gospel on our African continent, e.g. through participation in working groups and conferences. Missionaries can benefit significantly from attending the ICRC regional conferences.
6. African member churches of the ICRC expressed a need for help to remain Reformed and to proclaim the Gospel in their home countries, as well as a need for leadership training in newly formed congregations.
7. The FRCSA should support regional ICRC conferences as a means of mutual encouragement and towards the strengthening of ICRC member churches.
8. The FRCSA and the RCSA, as African church federations, are in a better position to provide certain forms of support to those churches than churches from other continents.
9. The upcoming ICRC conference in South Korea offers an opportunity for the FRCSA for contact with other member churches. Such ecclesiastical contacts form a less intensive relationship than a sister church relationship and will, therefore, be less demanding on the DRCA.

The following general budget was approved by Synod:

- **2025** – R35000
- **2026** – R32000
- **2027** – R50000

ADJOURNMENT FOR THE DAY

Rev. DM Boersma reads from Psalm 25 in which the poet prays for God's guidance in his revealed will and acceptance of God's hidden will. The friendship with God came to full fruition when Christ came and revealed his Father. He leads us in prayer.

ARTICLE 12: OPENING - 24 September 2024

We sing Hymn 4:1-4. Rev. PG Boon reads from Luke 15: 1-7 & Luke 17: 1-10 and speaks a few words of encouragement.

We do not need more credibility to do powerful things. Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, great things can be done. We only need to ask ourselves: Am I serving my Master? The churches belong to our Lord Jesus Christ and Synod is servants to God and to the churches. If it is his will, he will do great things through us.

Rev. Boon then leads us in prayer.

ARTICLE 13: DEPUTIES FOR CONTACTS WITH CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (DCCSA)

The Vice-chairman takes the chairman position because the chairman is a member of DCCSA. Chair Rev. Bruintjes welcomes Rev. P Kurpershoek from the Reformed Church Annlin and member of the Deputies Ecumenical Affairs: Inland of the RCSA. The report consists of two documents, namely the main report and the supplementary report.

Report

An overview of deputies' activities is given by the convenor Rev. HH van Alten. The bulk of deputies' time was spent on the relation with the Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA/GKSA).

Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH): this federation is diverse, and it is not fruitful to have contacts with them on a national level. It is better to have contacts on a local level. Local churches are encouraged to contact REACH and let deputies know if there is any fruitful contact.

Free Church in Southern Africa (FCSA): Deputies tried to have contact with the FCSA but nothing substantial materialised. Deputies are thankful to learn that Rev. Boon will take 5 members of the Free Church in Southern Africa to the ICRC meeting in Bellville, Cape Town, God willing in October 2024.

Deputies keep an eye on the developments regarding the Kairos Network in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA). This group is concerned about the developments within the DRCSA. This is a diverse group, so deputies weigh if it is possible and meaningful to make formal contact with this group.

Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk (APK): Deputies were invited to the Synod of the APK and after deliberation decided to send a letter to their Synod. Informal contact is kept with them.

Local contacts with Reformed Churches in South Africa. During October 2022 a robust meeting was held between FRCSA and RCSA churches who have local contacts in Pretoria, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Local contacts were also made with the Reformed Church of Ramotse.

It seems that there are differences in the approach between the Pretoria and the Cape Town churches in terms of local contacts.

In April 2024 a Memorandum was prepared by deputies of both federations to explain what the status quo of our relationship is and how we as churches can work together and what our desire is for the future. The results are found in the supplementary report.

Deputies have considered the 3 stumbling blocks as was decided upon by previous Synods and have questions about the weight of the stumbling blocks. Are the stumbling blocks of such a weight that it is valid to keep the federations apart?

Greeting message on behalf of the RCSA, response and prayer.

Synod is addressed by Rev. P Kurpershoek. (Addendum 5)

A response is given by Rev. Jaco de Beer. He stresses the task to work towards unity in truth. To stay in the truth and to stay true to our Reformed identity and contextualise it in our time. He then leads us in prayer for the Reformed Churches in South Africa.

Deliberations

The APK are working on changing article 3 but not to everyone's satisfaction. Some feel that, substantially, nothing has changed and that contacts with a church which has race preferences is a non-starter.

The ecclesiastical relationship with the RCNL is discussed. There is still a formal ecclesiastical relationship but the discussion with the RCNL is ongoing. For the RCSA it is difficult to reply, because in

the RCSA there is still debate on similar issues as in the RCNL (or currently the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK)). The RCSA is still in debate in terms of their own direction. When that is sorted, they will decide upon their relationship with the NGK.

The three points of division with the RCSA is the Cloete versification of the Psalms, women in the office of deacon and their relationship with the DRCSA (NG Kerk).

The RCSA's relationship with the DRCSA is a basic relationship with historical background. They are working and talking, but contact is becoming more constrained. Both churches are participating in the Inter Ecclesiastical Commission (Tussen-Kerklike Kommissie). The RCSA is critical with regards to the DRCSA, for instance regarding the gay issue, and talks are ongoing. The RCSA calls the DRCSA to repentance. In short, the RCSA is critical but keeping contact but does not have full ecclesiastical relations.

The RCSA work with 3 circles of ecumenical relations.

- Complete relationship or a full ecclesiastical relationship.
- Ecumenical ties – serious contact with serious deliberations, walking together, and which can develop into a relationship of full unity.
- Ecumenical contacts: The RCSA believes there is an unlimited ecumenical call. This category focuses on the broader church with reformed background, like the DRCSA. This contact is about witnessing to each other, reprimanding of each other and in some instances to work together.

The memorandum regarding the DRCSA only explains the current situation regarding the relationship with the DRCSA and confirms

that the relation is in the sphere of the third circle, the ecumenical contact.

The question is raised whether ecumenical contacts – which must take place in the truth - is possible if the truth of the gospel has been changed.

Is the APK and the RCSA in contact? Yes, the RCSA also focus on article 3 in contacts with the APK.

What other contacts do the RCSA have? There is a long list of international contacts on different levels. Rev. Kurpershoek will supply us with a list of all the relations the RCSA have.

- The RCSA have a full sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand
- The RCSA is part of the ICRC – and took part in the expelling of the RCNL. Through the ICRC there are also contacts with churches in Africa.

Remarks are made about transparency and to have the boldness to talk about problematic issues.

An observation in deputies' report was that the fracture lines are deepening, which was observed by our deputy who visited the RCSA's Synod. There was tension at Synod when regional synod of Pretoria's credential letter was not accepted. The matter of women in the office of elder is a visual sign of the fracture lines.

RCSA Synod appointed deputies to study the matter of churches who do not adhere to synods' decisions and how to handle this situation. Rev. Kurpershoek refers to Calvin who said that I will cross ten seas to protect the unity of the church. The different lines have all to do with different hermeneutical approaches. Local

churches tend to put themselves and their own viewpoint as point of departure without listening to each other. He asks us to pray for the RSCA. How far do you go before you get a separation? In the New Testament nobody walked away, but they were expelled. The RSCA put a lot of emphasis on protecting the structural unity of the church.

The matter of women in office, is it essential or non-essential? Rev. Kurpershoek gives a short summary of the history of this matter. It is still an essential matter, but this is now disputed by some churches. This has led to a messy situation. Currently it is a debate in the RSCA, but churches who install women in office are declining. Apparently, there is only one church in Pretoria that has installed women in the office of elder.

FRCA delegation reminds us to speak about the foundational / core issues to the churches. They are cautious to make decisive input but reminds us to stay faithful to the gospel. Speak the truth in love.

CanRC, in their contacts with some orthodox churches, have seen a similar situation as is seen with the Christelijke Gerformeerde Kerken (CGK). These churches also wrestle with the question of women in office. But in their context contacts with a church who excludes people because of race would be a clear non-starter.

How important is the history of the relationship versus the present moment? Our history with the RSCA in the past was poorer. The present moment is richer than the past. The 3 stumbling blocks are what keeps us apart. The RSCA have criticized us because through the years we have put up new barriers all the time. Are the stumbling blocks enough to keep us apart?

Delegates stress the fact that deputies should always interact with previous synod decisions and as such request deputies to do that regarding the 3 stumbling blocks.

Article 3 of the APK. Delegates state that, although the APK has worked on article 3, fundamentally nothing has changed. It was not a reformation as was stated in deputies' report at 9.7.1. This is a serious stumbling block in contacts.

10: 30 – 11:00 Refreshments

Rev. Bruintjes leads us in prayer for the next session.

The 3 stumbling blocks are raised. Deputies are requested to interact with previous synod decisions. It is a federational principle to interact with previous synod decisions.

The local contacts and the national contacts are discussed. Care should be taken that the one level is not moving faster than the other level. If local vs federational is not on par, unhealthy pressure may cause Synod to overlook things on a national level. This has led to unity between the GKv and the NGK in the Netherlands. It is emphasized that on both levels deputies and local churches should be open and honest about what they are doing and communicate openly to everyone about it.

It is interesting to note that our local churches normally do not interact with churches that uphold the 3 stumbling blocks.

The long-time vision that there cannot be more than one true church in one place: this viewpoint must be seen against the Kuyperian idea of the pluriformity of the church. It was an attempt to counter the idea of the idea of the pluriformity of the church.

CanRC reaction: the example of the Presbyterian churches is mentioned. We won't change their church structure, but we do try to acknowledge each other as far as possible. There are historical and church order differences. These differences are acknowledged but we also work and strive towards unity.

FRCA reaction: we work towards faithful unity if there are churches with different historical backgrounds and practices in the same place. The principle is to speak the truth in love on local level and on federational levels. Does their Synod uphold the truth, the Scripture and confessions?

The question is asked by Rev. Kurpershoek whether the 3 stumbling blocks make that the RCSA is not a reformed church anymore.

It is also emphasized to discuss developments in RCSA. Deputies must take note of currents flowing through and underneath the churches. There may be movements underneath, which is not on par, but how do you respond to these in a constructive way? Reference is made to Mark 9:38-40.

(The mandates and grounds for new Deputies were completed during a later session of Synod).

Decision

Synod decides:

1. To approve the new guidelines for more mature situations of deliberations.
2. To approve the draft agreement of local cooperation.
3. To accept and approve the Memorandum of Ecumenical Relations (both in English and in Afrikaans) as a truthful

description of the status quo of our relationship with the RCSA, and as an acceptable broad roadmap towards unity.

Synod decided to appoint new deputies with the following mandate.

1. To use the approved memorandum as basis for further discussions with deputies of the RCSA.
2. To make a concerted effort to familiarize the congregations of the FRCSA with the contents of the approved memorandum.
3. To convey to the RCSA that the ordination of women to the office of pastor and elder cannot be supported from Scripture and therefore there ought to be unity in their federation on this matter.
4. To investigate the long-held conviction in the FRCSA that "there cannot be two true churches in one place" and formulate our position on it.
5. To investigate the status of the three stumbling blocks (as was formulated by Synod Belhar 2021), considering the decisions of previous Synods.
6. To encourage and assist all the churches, especially those churches who are not currently engaging in local contacts, to initiate deliberations with local congregations of the RCSA or other churches of Reformed confession.
7. To distribute and raise awareness among the churches of a) the new guidelines for more mature situations of deliberations, and b) the draft agreement of cooperation.
8. To leave deliberations with specific REACH churches to the responsibility of the local churches, with the request to inform DCCSA of any such deliberations.
9. To continue pursuing contacts with the Free Church in Southern Africa (FCSA) and offer our assistance.

10. To stay abreast of developments in the so-called Kairos-network within the Dutch Reformed Church and become involved if possible.
11. To seek contact with other churches of Reformed confession.
12. To work with the approved budget of R10,000 per annum for activities of DCCSA.
13. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.
14. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Rules of Synod as adopted by Synod 2024.

Grounds

1. The existing guidelines are useful only for initiating contacts, but they are insufficient for established contacts that are growing. The new guidelines, borrowed from the RCSA, are suitable for growing contacts. Using their guidelines as basis shows our intent of working towards unity.
2. We thank the Lord for the many ways in which our churches can cooperate with the RCSA. Working together as federations may show a more powerful witness and may lead to a more effective ministry.
3. Synod deems it of the utmost importance that the status quo of our relationship with the RCSA as well as the goal of our deliberations with them are stated clearly to show our serious intention to work towards unity.
4. The local churches need to know the current status of the relationship and the roadmap we have agreed on to move forward.
5. Scripture gives clear instructions regarding the issue of

ordination of women. Worldwide this is a contended issue that divides churches. Reformed churches need to make a clear stand that the authority of Scripture is decisive. The RCSA are battling with this issue. Our call to them might encourage them to make a strong stand on this issue.

6. Deputies Ecumenicity of the RCSA posed this question to deputies DCCSA. We need to give clarity on this matter, given the role this conviction played at the start of the FRCSA and how it played a role in our relationship with the RCSA.
7. Deputies Ecumenicity of the RCSA posed this question to deputies DCCSA. We need to be very clear on the nature and weight of the 3 stumbling blocks.
8. The REACH churches are quite diverse. National contacts do not seem fruitful at this stage, but local contacts may be helpful.
9. The FCSA is an ICRC member church. They are isolated, and therefore it is imperative to continue to seek contact and encourage them.
10. Concerned churches in the Dutch Reformed Church are organizing themselves. We need to get an impression where they are heading and determine how we can respond and possibly support Reformation in the DRCSA.
11. Christ calls us to the unity of faith.

13:00 -14:00 Lunch.

ARTICLE 14: DEPUTIES BIBLE TRANSLATION

Deputies for Bible translation, Rev. J van der Linden and br. G Bijker are welcomed to Synod. Rev. Van der Linden is given the opportunity to give an overview of the report.

Report

The 1933/1953 OAV translation is nearly 100 years old. The new translation work was taken seriously by the Bible Society and translators.

The deputyship functioned well.

At a previous Synod it was decided not to choose for a specific source text. This has caused a stir in the churches. Some people feel that parts of the Bible were taken away. This feeling is more among the churches in the north, than in the south. Deputies organised an evening to address this issue. It is recommended not to make a final decision now, but we need to move forward.

The 1951 Bible translation was introduced in the Netherlands. It was tested and 8 years later Synod decided that it was an acceptable Bible translation based on the critical text.

The 2020 Bible translation is called a literal translation. It is not dynamic equivalent. But it seems less literal than the 1953 translation.

It is difficult to involve church members in the evaluation because members do not understand the source languages. Members tend to make conclusions without proper knowledge of the different source texts and translations.

Deputies recommend that the 2020 Bible translation should be used more from the pulpit to see and test if this translation is literal enough. There should be no need to correct the translation the whole time. Pastors are asked to give feedback on this.

There are many improvements in terms of the old words in the 1933/53 OAV translation.

In general, each translation has its stronger and its weaker points.

The footnotes are useful, because they address text critical issues. The glossary has value.

We do not see deliberate deception, or a specific theological agenda. There are no Bible critical views in the translation itself.

Reference is also made to the capital letter and small letter editions.

One big concern is with the liberal views in the introductions to certain Bible books. This was conveyed to the Bible Society, but currently they have no interest in removing the introductions. We need to make decisions on this.

Bible translation is an emotional issue. Deputies recommend using the translation provisionally on the pulpit and request feedback from the pastors.

Questions for clarification

The position of the Bible Society is that it is an inter-denominational organisation and is there to serve the churches. The decision of the 2020 Bible translation project was made by them. They have the copyright. They dictate the process and decisions. Interesting to note is that translations in African languages were made before translations in Afrikaans.

Deliberations

There is gratitude for work that the deputyship has done.

The dynamic equivalent 1983 Afrikaans translation was not accepted in our churches.

A discussion point was what Sepedi and English translations are used in the Sotho speaking churches. A few translations are used on the pulpit and even more at home, so deputies feel that it is important to give guidelines on this. One of the problems is that the language of the translations is very official, and members tend to choose translations which are easier to read and understand. Deputies in the past proposed the ESV and 1984 NIV to all churches. What we propose at synod is one thing, but in practice people rather use translations that they understand. This is more of an issue in the Sotho speaking churches than in the Afrikaans speaking churches. The Afrikaans speaking members tend to use what is used on the pulpit.

Apparently, there are three Sepedi translations available, and it will be good if deputies can give guidance on these. Delegates accept that guidance to the churches is necessary.

The NIV readers translation is faithful and translated in a more understandable English

Decision

Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To evaluate *Bybelvertaling 2020* for official use in our Afrikaans speaking churches.
2. To ask the Afrikaans-speaking ministers in our church federation to critically and provisionally use *Bybelvertaling 2020* on the pulpit, and ask their feedback, especially also whether this translation is literal enough as a pulpit Bible.

3. To educate the churches on the positive and negative aspects of *Bybelvertaling 2020*, as well as the *Ou Afrikaanse Vertaling* (OAV) 1953.
4. To correspond with the deputies of the RCSA (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika) and the APK (Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerke) and possibly other likeminded churches to work together on a *Bybelvertaling 2020* edition without the introductory material that was added to each Bible book.
5. To educate the churches on Sotho and English Bible translations and what are good choices of Bible translations for them to use.
6. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.
7. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Grounds

1. One should not decide on a new Bible translation hastily, and so it is good to continue this mandate.
2. *Bybelvertaling 2020* does not consciously try to mislead the reader, therefore it will be good to take a further step in our evaluation of this translation. The best way to evaluate this translation is to use it very actively, and for the main purpose that we are evaluating the translation, namely as a Bible translation we want to use in our worship services. Taking this step does not eliminate mandate 1. We are still in the process of evaluating *Bybelvertaling 2020*. This should also be

communicated to the church members so that they understand the process.

3. A translation can be a faithful translation according to its own purpose, and still not be ideal as a pulpit Bible translation. It is especially the ministers who will know if a Bible translation is suitable (“literal enough”) as a pulpit Bible translation.
4. As we keep evaluating the *Bybelvertaling 2020*, it is important to keep the churches updated on our findings. But it is also important that our churches have a realistic view of OAV 1953 and see the positives and negatives of that translation.
5. In some introductions we find views that oppose our Reformed view of Scripture, but we still hope it is possible to come to a *Bybelvertaling 2020* edition without the *Introductions* soon, and therefore we should keep the discussion about this going.
6. We have proposed certain Bible translations for the Sotho-speaking churches to use, but it is important that they understand why these choices have been made and why it is important.
7. English translations have been proposed to all the churches, but it is important that they understand why these choices have been made.

ARTICLE 15: DEPUTIES FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC

Rev. J van der Linden represents this deputyship.

Report

The deputyship functioned well.

Rev. Van der Linden explains our churches’ view on the hymnal, which was adopted by Synod 2011. The aim that we have is to sing

about the fullness of Christ. If we take Col. 3:16 seriously it is not acceptable that we cannot sing certain parts of the full richness of Christ. Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you – in the context of Col. 3:16 this means the teachings of Christ. Through songs, the richness of God’s revelation in Christ must dwell in us. It is our response to God revealing Himself to us. It is central to who we are as churches. We add hymns only to add to our singing of the fullness of Christ. It is about ADDING TO. For this we need quality songs which can add to our current hymnal.

The deputies have worked through the available hymnbooks three times and the result is limited to the 15 songs they have proposed. These hymns are seen as an enrichment to our current hymnal.

In the document “Laat die woord van Christus ryklik in julle woon” deputies have discussed and answered 15 objections against the singing of hymns. The church councils can use it in the churches to educate and guide members on this matter.

For the Sotho-speaking churches deputies proposed that, for the evaluation of *Difela* and the subsequent selection of hymns based on the Synod 2011 principle, this work is done by a knowledgeable person, like brother Jeremiah Mhlanga. This work has dragged on for too long without progress and if needed this person can be remunerated.

The FRC Maranata has proposed to reconsider the revised Totius versification (beryming), because young people do not know some of the old Afrikaans words in the 1936 Totius versification. The reason for this is understandable but it is not wise to do things in isolation. No GKSA/RCSA church is using this. Apparently, the revision was quite radical. Deputies proposed to make it part of the

discussion in our contacts with local Reformed churches and give feedback to deputies on this matter.

The GKSA song App is under revision, and they have expertise to do it. The copyright issues of Hymnbook App of br. SA Jansen have been sorted out. Furthermore, we have bought the rights to use hymns from the DRCSA's hymnbooks.

Deliberations

The English Book of Praise is already used sometimes in some of the churches.

Our sister churches explain that the use of a cap (for example 50 or 100 hymns) is not always helpful for the cause. The use of a cap can sometimes be frustrating. The FRCA currently have 85 hymns and the CanRC have a cap of 100 hymns. The goal is not always achieved by using a cap.

A diversity in songs is helpful for liturgical use especially for things that are done often, like the confessional singing of the Apostolic creed.

It is good if the church federation has a set hymnbook to which all have agreed, which is loved by all and one which the members can grow up with and grow old with.

There is a struggle with singing on the Cape Flats. For the people there, the Genevan tunes are not easy to sing. Is it possible to compile a hymnbook with alternative songs for the churches on the Cape Flats? Guidance is needed for their congregational singing.

Synod appreciates the hard work done by deputies over the years and for the thorough document “Laat die Woord van Christus ryklik in julle woon”.

The principles and vision that was adopted by Synod 2011 are also important for Sotho-speaking churches.

The churches of Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg have commented on the 14 Skrifberymings and it is generally accepted.

The framework of the Catechism topics is not seen as the complete framework for identifying themes in which a need for songs is identified. List A is the list of themes identified by the churches and list B contains extra hymns that deputies felt would enrich our singing of the fullness in Christ. From what deputies have said it looks like our hymnal may be limited to the 39 hymns that have been selected over the years and up to now.

16:00 Refreshments

Deliberations (continued)

After the break, time was given to react on the hymn selection of 15 hymns that was proposed by deputies.

Hymn 277: although the words “Liewe Jesus” is not wrong it may be wise to change the words to “Heilige Jesus” as it is already used like that in the hymn.

Hymn 282 is about our place in South Africa. Deputies give an explanation why this song was chosen. It highlights our calling as churches in South Africa.

No further comments were made on the selection of hymns.

Decision

Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To ask churches to provide feedback on the 14 Skrifberymings that were approved for testing, and to report to the next Synod.
2. To ask churches to provide feedback on the new Hymns that Synod provisionally approved for testing in the churches, and to report to the next Synod (see List A and List B in Deputies' Report to Synod Mamelodi).
3. To translate the document "Laat die woord van Christus ryklik in julle woon – *Beantwoording van die Besware teen die Gesange*" into English and bring it to the attention of the church councils for use in the discussions with their congregations, and to make it available to the church members.
4. To stay updated on developments regarding the 1936 Totius versification – hard copy and the mobile application – and ensure that through a financial contribution from our federation, the 1936 versification remains widely available to all going forward.
5. To stay updated on the developments of the new app "Hymnbook" as a possibility to use in our churches.
6. To authorise deputies to evaluate each of the songs of the *Lifela tsa Sione* through an external person (with theological and language knowledge) and to give a short report on each song with a view to standardising the Hymnal of the Sotho-speaking churches. The external person may be compensated for this work. The Sotho-speaking churches and the Mission Team should be involved in this process.
7. To make contact with the Sotho-speaking section of the RCSA Deputies Liturgy to learn from one another in our aim to find Psalms and hymns to sing the fullness of God's work in Christ.
8. To evaluate the collection of hymns used on the Cape Flats to

- assist and guide them in their hymn selection and help them grow towards the principles all churches have agreed to.
9. To encourage churches to discuss the revised Totius beryming with the local RSCA churches.
 10. To use the following approved budget for the next three years:
 - 2025: R15000 (Includes a donation to the Calvyn Jubileum Boeke Fonds)
 - 2026: R5000
 - 2027: R5000
 11. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.
 12. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Grounds

1. Deputies did not receive feedback from all the churches. It will be good that we get as much unity as possible in our hymnal choices.
2. This is part of the process we follow to adopted new songs in our churches.
3. This is still a contentious and dividing issue in some of our churches. Also, understanding the purpose and focus of our Hymnal (collection of songs we sing) is very important.
4. This is a continuous mandate as to ensure that our Psalm book is available for use in our churches.
5. We have encouraged the developer of this app to secure the necessary copyright for using the material on this app. The developer does not yet have all the necessary approvals for

all the songs that the FRCSA use (Psalms & Skrifberymings, new Skrifberymings, Hymns). This is a useful app to our churches but securing copyright permissions is a vital step in this process.

6. It remains important that the Sotho-speaking churches are actively discussing this important aspect of the worship service, while also helping one another to be careful in what they select as their sacrifice of praise.
7. The evaluation of the *Lifela Tsa Sione* hymnal has dragged for too long and this mandate will speed up the process.
8. We as churches have limited time and experience, and it will be wise to learn from Reformed brothers and sisters who face the same challenges that we do.
9. The possible use of the revised Totius beryming should not be done in isolation.

ARTICLE 16: DEPUTIES INTERNET

Deputies are represented by br. G Bijker and Rev. J de Beer

Report

The website is of an administrative nature. There were no big issues. The big question is what we want to achieve, since there is also the website of the Reformational Study Centre <https://www.christelikemedia.org/>.

Deliberations

We are historically a more closed church. There are people looking for a reformed church. We should use our website as an instrument to help people find their way to a reformed church.

The plan is to make it modern and attractive and keep it updated with the newest information. It should also have a missional and friendly character.

Examples of what can be done are shown on the projector. The examples used are the website of the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA) <https://www.urcna.org/> and of The Reformed Churches in the United States (RCUS) <https://rcus.org/>.

We should find creative church members who can redesign the website. The idea is also to encourage local churches to build their own website.

Rev. de Beer is available in an advisory capacity.

Decision

Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To redesign the website (<https://www.frc.org.za/> & <https://www.vgk.org.za/>) and make it more attractive and modern.
2. To encourage local churches to develop their websites, keep the websites updated and current with all publications, and encourage churches, deputies and editors of publications to upload all their latest information on the website and keep it up to date.
3. To ensure that all pages of the website are in both Afrikaans and English.
4. To approve the budget of R5 000 per year.
5. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.
6. To report to the next Synod and formulate recommendations according to Art 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Closure of this session

Rev. Jaco de Beer reads from 2 Timothy 3. He emphasises that there is nothing new and that false teachings will always try to find its way into the churches and that we must fight against ungodliness in the churches.

We must stay true to what we have in our reformed history and reformed confessions. Preach the word and trust the Lord to lead us in the context we live in. We must remain faithful in what we have learned from God's word.

He then leads us in prayer and thanksgiving and prays for the family of br. Farentino Koks whose cousin lost a baby yesterday.

18:00 Supper

ARTICLE 17: MISSION DEPUTIES SOUTH AFRICA

We sing Psalm 67: 2 & 3.

The deputies are represented by brs. Iwan Agema, Sietze Snijder and Jaco van Rensburg.

Report

Br. Agema highlights some aspects of their report. Zuid-Africa Mission (ZAM) has implemented the principle of 50% whereby projects are only funded if local funding carries the other 50% of the budget. The other important fact is that our churches' relationship with the RCNL (now the NGK) has come to an end.

ZAM will donate funds if projects are based on the SMART principle which is:

- S - specific
- M - measurable
- A - attainable
- R - relevant
- T - time-bound

Questions for clarity and deliberations

Any other sources of income may be obtained if we are not more reliant than 50% on ZAM.

A three-year building down period is what is accepted although the Cape are working with a 5-year period.

The question is raised if it is ethical to use ZAM's funds if our relationship with the RC liberated/ GKv has come to an end.

ZAM requests that new projects must be scoped and packaged into a 5-year project and not a 20-25 year or long-term project. ZAM does not like open-ended timelines.

The churches must decide on the projects. The project money follows that. Money should not decide what the churches should do. Maranata's vision was to plant a network of living churches, and this mission is nearing completion. If the aftercare is completed, Maranata will stop being the sending church who has primary responsibility. In future Classis North should discuss mission in the greater Tshwane area and decide upon a new direction.

Mission deputies have contacted both the FRCA and the CanRC for funding. The Canadian government makes it difficult for the CanRC to send funds overseas. The CanRC funds a substantial part of our students at CRTS. The FRCA is flexible so that, if there are surplus funds available from the money that they currently donate to Deputies Theological Training, it can be used for other needs in the federation. Each deputyship that receives funds must give proper feedback on what the money was used for.

If possible, there should be an equal distribution of money for God's kingdom.

ZAM uses the SMART approach of specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound. The approach is helpful. Although it seems that ZAM themselves is moving more in the direction of social projects, if a project is well planned and structured, they are not against the idea of a church plant. ZAM is not too prescriptive in terms of our projects. We as churches still adhere to the calling of planting churches by which a congregation is formed by and around the preaching of the gospel.

Our church plants took long. The institution date was pushed back a few times. You plan but also depend upon God's blessing of the work. We wrote in our reports why the institution was delayed. ZAM took to heart what happened in our mission work and was gracious in extending the timeline of our projects.

We should grow out of our dependency mode.

Help from overseas churches is helpful if it is sustainable for a longer period.

Projects must be planned in faith and the financial side must follow from that.

Planting a local church is the best asset for a community. Funds for the work on the Cape Flats or for new projects can be obtained if it is based on the SMART principle and adheres to the set standards.

Newly instituted churches must also sign the federation's cooperation agreement.

The discussion on Mission is postponed until Thursday morning when we will have more clarity on the finances of the federation.

ARTICLE 18: DEPUTIES ART 49 CO - CLASSIS SOUTH AND CLASSIS NORTH

Decisions

1. The reports of the deputies Classis North and the report of the deputies Classis South are accepted.
2. It is accepted that deputies can be present online at classis preaching consent (licensure) examinations.
3. The Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate according to art. 49 of the Church Order:
 - 3.1 "The synod, in addition, shall appoint deputies who are to assist the classes in all matters comprised in the Church Order, and – upon the request of the classes – in cases of special difficulties. They, or some of them, shall also oversee the peremptory examination of prospective ministers.
 - 3.2 The deputies shall keep an accurate record of their work and submit a written report. They shall, if so required, justify their actions."

ARTICLE 19: DEPUTIES CLASSIS SOUTH DAY OF PRAYER

A Day of Prayer was called by the church of Johannesburg for Sunday 25th of July 2021.

Deliberations

A day of thanksgiving is as important as a day of prayer. After Covid subsided we did not have a day of thanksgiving. We should keep that in mind for the future.

Decision

1. Classis South's report is accepted with thanks by the Synod.
2. Classis North is appointed for calling Days of Prayer.

20:15 ADJOURNMENT FOR THE DAY

Rev. Gerrit Brintjes reads from Acts 10: 34 – 44. God shows no partiality. He has no preference. Gentiles are also included into his kingdom. God gave the same gift namely Jesus Christ to them as to us. We should be humble; not think we are more preferred by God than others and glorify God. The gentiles believed in God and received the Spirit. The Spirit is witness to the truth.

He then leads us in prayer and thanksgiving for the day's work and for blessing the work of Synod.

We sing Hymn 32: 1-3, Christ above all glory seated.

ARTICLE 20: OPENING – 25 September 2025

Br. F Koks opens the meeting with Bible reading from Mark 9: 38-42 and leads us in prayer for today's work of Synod. Synod sings Ps. 119: 24 & 25.

ARTICLE 21: DEPUTIES ART 11 NEEDY CHURCHES

The chair welcomes br. Ruan Snijder who will represent the Deputies for Needy Churches and give him the opportunity to give feedback to Synod.

Report

- Members of the deputies worked well together. Br. Raimond has asked to be replaced as chairman.
- Br. Snijder highlights some points of their mandate. The loan to Deputies Theological training was fully repaid at the end of 2023.
- The churches gave according to their allocation.
- Deputies approved a request from FRC Soshanguve GG.
- If more churches are instituted, deputies' funds will dry up in 2-3 years. A thorough budget of different scenarios is presented.

Deliberations

The chairman reads CO Art 11 and explains the principle of this article. The consistory on behalf of the congregation shall be bound to provide for the proper support of its ministers. Thereafter the fellowship of the federation is there to help. If a church receives help, they are not less than the others.

We must keep in mind that there might be more churches instituted than what was shown by deputies.

A combined meeting of different deputies was led by Mission Deputies SA. There are minutes available of that meeting. The plan is to have a more holistic approach to budgets.

Deputies had the approach that if a congregation could not fulfil the basic needs of a pastor there should be no hindrance for the pastor, no hindrance for the furthering of God's kingdom. In general, there is a willingness of local churches to provide for the basic needs of a pastor. It was communicated to current deputies by previous deputies to become more lenient and not to hinder the spread of the gospel.

A discussion follows in terms of a pastor's basic needs and broader needs. Guidelines and decisions made by the ad-hoc synod 2012 and later synods are still applicable and should be adhered to by deputies. Deputies for sustainability gave a clear guideline in terms of basic elements and non-basic elements. Art 11 is there to provide for the non-basic elements to help the pastor function within the federation. Art 11 deputies steered away from this decision.

What are basic elements and non-basic elements? How is it defined? Half of the congregation on Cape Flats cannot feed themselves. The other half cannot cover the basic food costs of a pastor.

We should discuss the scenario when a congregation is poor. If one pastor has milk in his tea it is not nice if another pastor does not have milk in his tea. We should try to have equal stipends for ministers.

It can happen that a congregation is not willing to open their wallets. Local churches can sometimes become lazy when they see the financial balances of Deputies Art 11. Mention is made of Jesus sitting at the treasury when a widow gave a substantial part of her income to the temple. Deputies need wisdom to navigate with wisdom in the complex situation.

It is not healthy or wise for the federation to lean heavily on financial aid from abroad. The federation should become more creative. There is the possibility of tentmaking ministry as happens in Africa.

A church can be instituted whether there is a pastor or not. There can be part-time pastors or tentmaking ministers. Churches can work together, for example two churches can call one pastor.

In Wesbank 20% of the congregation are employed. We need funds from outside of the federation. Are we allowed to find funds outside of the federation? Established churches can do more for newly instituted churches. A church member that needs help first goes to his family, then seeks help from his church. Sometimes the work of deacons is more difficult than the work of elders. A federation must do all in its power to help needy churches to spread the gospel.

Church members should learn to be self-sustainable. We cannot live off handouts. If you do the same things again you will also get the same results. The churches on the Cape Flats should be creative with the piece of land they have.

There are churches on the Cape Flats, like the Pentecostal churches (Basalwane) that have beautiful church buildings. They ask for a lot of money. If you join the church, you must sign a debit order. There is a saying among people in the townships that some churches are R5 churches or cheap churches while others are expensive churches.

In our mission situation in Classis North sometimes 10% of a congregation is unemployed while the majority is employed.

CanRC: The Thusano fund is funded from the Foreign Student Bursary Fund. There is a genuine desire to help. Community development can be part of that.

FRCA – It is not good if there is a dependency mode. It is not good, neither for the donor, nor for the receiver.

Involvement in the local community is important. An example is given of one sister in the congregation who continuously went through the newspapers to see if there are jobs available, and then let others know when she found something. The church must be invested in the congregation. They must know their members.

A healthy local church is God's plan to save communities. Money is not going to do it. The church must teach people how to live. The church must teach people how to take responsibility. Teach young people to live responsibly. The church must put its body on the line. Keep on teaching and implementing Biblical principles for living a responsible life.

Deputies for sustainability have seen that there is nearly a 100% employment rate for skilled people like artisans. Those who have studied mostly find a job. There are government projects where resources are available. There are big employers in our churches who can employ skilled people.

The diaconal committee of the ICRC has discussed the topic of sustainable churches. There is material available on this topic.

It is suggested that the federation organises a conference for a well prepared and structural discussion on sustainability of the church federation, to find substantial solutions for the problems we are facing.

10:15 – 10:30 Refreshments

Decision

Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To prepare, in cooperation with other deputies, a proposal for a sustainable federation. To achieve this:
2. Convene a subcommittee, consisting of one member of each of the following deputies: Mission Deputies, Deputies Art 11 CO, Deputies Theological Training, and Deputies Art 19 CO.
3. Ask all the local churches for their inputs in terms of principles and practical implications for financial sustainability. Inputs must be given within 6 months.
4. Organise a conference in the 2nd half of 2025, to bring the churches together to discuss the inputs.
5. Based on the outcome of the conference, prepare a proposal for a possible ad-hoc Synod.
6. To reacquaint themselves with the decisions and reports of Synod 2011, ad-hoc Synod 2012 and Synod 2017 regarding the principles for assistance to needy churches, and to apply these principles with wisdom in the different contexts.
7. To consider any request for financial support coming from one of the churches and support that church with wisdom according to decisions and guidelines made by previous Synods.
8. To levy the churches for the calendar years 2025-2027:
 - 2025: R410 500
 - 2026: R451 550

- 2027: R471 125
9. If funds are received from foreign donors, to inform the donors how these funds are being used.
 10. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.
 11. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to article 11 of the Rules of Synod.

Grounds

1. The way in which the FRCSA is currently functioning with regards to mission work, needy churches, and theological training is both structurally and financially not feasible in the long term, and a more sustainable way should be found.
2. Decisions about the principles and processes for assisting needy churches have been made and should be adhered to.
3. Every needy church is different, and therefore the principles and processes should be applied with wisdom.
4. This is the primary responsibility of Deputies Art. 11, and should be carried out with diligence, wisdom, and thankfulness for God's providence.
5. Deputies Art. 11 need the financial support from the churches to carry out their mandate.
6. Donors need to see that funds were used responsibly.

ARTICLE 22: DEPUTIES FOR LITURGICAL FORMS AND FORM PRAYERS

Br. D Drijfhout is welcomed by the chair and given the opportunity to address Synod.

Report

He explains the new reprint of Puku Ya Kereke. The Puku ya Kereke (Church Book) is the Sepedi translation of the confessions and liturgical forms as were printed originally in 1983 by the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, The Reformed Churches in SA and the Reformed Church in Southern Africa (Hervormde Kerk in Suidelike Afrika). He also mentions that a Setswana book on the Heidelberg Catechism is available on the website of the Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds : <http://cjbfd.co.za/boeke/index2.html>.

He thanks br. Jan Middeljans and sr. Louise Ros for their contributions. He also thanks br. Oscar Makobe for assisting Rev. Boon with the Sepedi translation of the Church Order of the Free Reformed Churches. The reprint of Puku ya Kereke and the Sepedi translation of the Church Order is accepted by the churches.

The budget will be submitted and is based on printing of 250 copies of Puku ya Kerke, 250 copies of the Liturgical Forms and Form Prayers, which is used in the Afrikaans speaking churches, 100 copies of the FRC Form Prayers in English and 10 hours of graphic design and editing work in 2024 (with further 30 hours during 2025 to 2027).

Br. Drijfhout is thanked for his presentation.

The Liturgical Forms and Form prayers were edited by previous deputies and provisionally approved for use by the churches. The

form prayers, church order and order of liturgy was then printed in Afrikaans and English in a booklet in 2021. Feedback from the churches was requested by deputies in June 2023. Responses on the Alternative Form for Celebrating the Lord's Supper were received from 2 churches. The form prayers are accepted by the churches.

In terms of the alternative version of the form for celebrating the Lord's Supper two churches have responded. Deputies recommend studying the feedback of the churches and make a recommendation to Synod 2027. The Johannesburg congregation will also send feedback on the alternative form for celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Decision

The Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To add the translated church order in a future new reprint of Puku ya Kereke.
2. To study the objections and recommendations received from the churches on the Alternative Form for Celebrating the Lord's Supper and present a recommendation to Synod 2027.
3. To budget for publishing and printing:
 - 2025: R29500
 - 2026: R9500
 - 2027: R17500
4. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.

5. To report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

ARTICLE 23: DEPUTIES STATED CLERK AND ARCHIVE

Br. Kees Roose gives feedback on the work of the deputies. There was a main report and an addendum report. Attention was given to the nine mandates deputies received.

Deliberations

In terms of the electronic archiving system the federation should at least have all documents that our church federation's Synods have produced over the years.

The official language of Synod is English and therefore Synod rules, deputies' reports, and synod acts are in English. Hard copies of all documents are kept in the archive as well.

In terms of the electronic Church book, it is desirable to have in there all the material that has a permanent character and are not changed on a periodical basis. In principle all materials are included which are not published in the Book of Praise, the black RCSA's Psalmbook or the Puku ya Kereke. The Sepedi version of the church order is included to reflect the unity of our churches.

The addendum report of deputies was also covered by the deliberations.

Decision

The synod decides:

1. To approve amendment of Rule 2.1.1 of the Rules of Synod, from: “At least six (6) months” to “At least seven (7) months”.
2. To use the English version of the Synod Rules as the official version.
3. To honourably discharge br. C Roose as Deputy Stated Clerk & Archive and thank him for his many years of service in this capacity.

The synod also decides to re-appoint br. A Smit as Deputy Stated Clerk & Archive with the following mandate:

1. To arrange the printing and publishing of the Acts of Synod 2024.
2. To request appointed deputies to provide information regarding the process of their mandate on a regular basis.
3. To conduct, upon instruction from the synod or the convening church, the administration of the synod.
4. To act as the archivist in collaboration with the archive church and to implement an archiving system.
5. To continue to arrange all church federation documents, as indicated by FRCSA Synods of 2008 up to 2024, in a suitable form, and to do this in cooperation with Deputies Revision of Liturgical Forms and Prayers and Deputies for Liturgical Music.
6. To coordinate with all other relevant deputyships for the compilation and electronic publishing of a ‘Church Book’ in English, Afrikaans and SePedi, consisting of all relevant church federation documents, with the following restrictions:
 - 6.1 To include the Afrikaans versions of the following:
 - “Liturgiese Formuliere en Gebede”;
 - “Ordes van Eredienste”;
 - “Kerkorde van die VGKSA”;

- List of “Gesange” as provisionally approved by Synod.
- 6.2 To exclude the Afrikaans versions of the following:
 - The “Belydenisskrifte” (Confessions);
 - Psalms and “Skrifberymings”.
 - 6.3 To include the English versions of the following:
 - The Church Order of the FRCSA;
 - The Rules of Synod of the FRCSA;
 - Liturgical Forms and Form Prayers which are not in the Book of Praise.
 - 6.4 To exclude the English versions of the following:
 - The Reformed Confessions;
 - Orders of Worship Services;
 - Psalms and Hymns.
 - 6.5 To include the SePedi version of the church order.
7. To handle administrative matters during the period between synod meetings on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa.
 8. To investigate and to start implementing an electronic archiving system for all electronically available documents to be used by the churches.
 9. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held, Lord willing, more or less halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.
 10. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Delegates pray together by saying the Lord’s prayer.

13:00 - 14: 00 Lunch

ARTICLE 24: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

Prof. J van Vliet is present online and accepted and welcomed as an advisor. Br. Hagg is welcomed as deputy.

Report

Br Ronald Meeske gives an introduction and overview of the report. He highlights the principle of Theological training by referring to Ps. 119: 105: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light on my path.

In the past vacancies in our church federation were not easily filled. Investigations were done in terms of Theological Training at an overseas seminary. Contact was made with CRTS and this led to the Memorandum of Understanding. A path or trajectory for theological training was outlined for South African students who are called to become ministers in the churches.

In 2024 there are 8 students on the program of which, God willing, 3 will complete their studies by 2026 and 2 more by 2028.

Deputies are thankful for the quality of CRTS and thankful for the support of CRTS and the financial support from the Foreign Student Bursary Fund (FSBF – Canada) and the FRCA. Ten percent of the federation budget is used for theological training which annually accounts for R1.3m.

One of the weaknesses we are facing is that language studies are not always done in a favourable environment.

The investigation into local possibilities for theological training. Various meetings were held with the Reformed Theological Academy (RTA) or Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie (GTA). Discussions took place with Prof. Dolf Britz on how we can work together. There is good cooperation between deputies and RTA. We will assist where we can. We must remember that we are a

small federation. The RTA is not accredited yet. Deputies accept that there are benefits if you can train students close to your churches.

If we reflect on synod, we see the benefit of having overseas delegates. It may be possible to contextualize theological training and make use of a central overseas facility.

Not only is knowledge important, but also the spiritual formation of a student and the benefit of having mentorship for the students.

The convenor thanks everybody involved in Theological training. Br. Gerard and sr. Cora Hagg who did a lot of work. Rev. J van der Linden and Rev. H Breytenbach for the substantial role they have played in terms of working with students. Thanks also to the other and previous deputies.

We are a small bond and the fact that our students can study at CRTS is a miracle and a big blessing. It wouldn't be possible for us to do this on our own. CRTS is a blessing of the Lord for the federation.

Rev. J Temple feedback on FRCSA students

Four of our five students are in rev. Temple's congregation. The single brothers do well. They flourish. They are also growing in knowledge, faith and socially. It's been a blessing. They engage in church life, are involved in youth groups, youth ministries. They and us are blessed. It is more challenging for brothers that have families. The reality of our relations with the FRCSA has sprung to life. It also helped in contacts between Canadian Reformed Churches, because our students have preached in different Canadian Reformed churches.

CRTS is a multicultural environment. There are many students from all over the world. They bring a different perspective to life. Everybody is blessed with this environment.

We will assist, if possible, in terms of possible Theological Training in SA.

Report by Prof. J van Vliet

Prof. van Vliet remembers well the Macedonian call, the cry for help from the FRCSA deputies. Today there is joy of what the Lord is doing. It is truly amazing.

The ratio of students to churches is the highest from South Africa. The warmth of the bond between South Africa and Canada is special. There are mutual blessings, and our students quickly fit into the environment. We see the work of the Lord and the Spirit in many ways.

The possibility of online studies and face to face studies are compared. Face to face studies is the preferred choice. One student has summed it up like this: “When I am online, I am a spectator but when I am in class, I am a participant.” We are grateful that some students could do parts of their studies online. It was a blessing.

Prof. van Vliet mentions the situation where language subjects (Hebrew and Greek) and theological subjects are combined as in the B.Div. programme. Many times the language subjects are then squeezed into the course. Learning the languages takes time. Language studies then come second. Many who enrol have had too little language training. There are ministers that realise that their language is not good enough. So CRTS prefers only language studies in the first years.

CRTS tries to the best of our ability to prepare students for multi-cultural settings. The context of South Africa is also included. We can't teach the special circumstances in South Africa. A student who applied for a dogmatics paper on the doctrine of church has

asked to specifically focus on the circumstances in South Africa. Topics will be identified for that.

A website was built which contains videos and materials for students who consider theological training towards the ministry. This is helpful in mentoring them before they come to seminary. It also focuses on their wives, fiancés and girlfriends because they are just as part of the process as the students.

Feedback regarding the RTA by Dr. G Meijer

RCSA has decided to start an independent seminary, the RTA. The principle is that a theological academy is done by the churches for the churches. The RTA is set up to serve the churches.

The educational playground in South Africa is difficult to enter into, because of all kinds of laws including the BELA act. It is difficult to register academies.

The plan is that it is not only for students but also for regular church members who desire short courses for further spiritual growth. This is also a Macedonian call to the FRCSA, and although the RCSA are bigger, the FRCSA have a history of theological training. We need each other

For 2025 – the first year – certificate courses are developed. The RTA will work together with Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in America to develop more courses in theology. The idea is also to take the study of Bible languages away from North-West University.

Context in South Africa is important. The FRCSA are requested to join forces for this work in South Africa.

Art 19 & DTT

Br Meeske explains the relation between Art 19 & DTT. The needs of theological students must be assessed. The mandate of art 19 is to assess the cost to get students to CRTS. There is normally a fixed cost to send a student to CRTS. The deputies are separated for proper control. FRCA money for DTT is passed on to deputies Art 19.

Questions to Prof. van Vliet

Q: How is the academic performance of our students?

A: Our students perform above average. English is sometimes a challenge. Recordings of classes have transcriptions, which help them.

Q: Is there any preference in terms of a student's practical internship either in SA or in Canada?

A: CRTS does not have preferences for any geographical location. The principle is to find the best mentor (pastor) and student combination. We are very accommodating. As long as it is the best match for the spiritual and personal formation of the student.

Q: How important is the licensure examination?

Background on the question: There was a different custom in the FRCSA federation. It developed on the mission field that a student preached under mentorship of a missionary. This happened without a licensure examination.

A: A licensure examination is required by the CanRC church order to speak an edifying word. The principle is that the churches are responsible for guarding the pulpit. Preaching the gospel is the heartbeat of the church. He preaches not only in one church but in more churches. It will hinder the progress of the students if there

are differences between the CanRC and the FRCSA in terms of the licensure examination.

ARTICLE 25: DEPUTIES ART 19 CO NEEDY STUDENTS

Br. Ernst van Vondel representing art 19 Needy students is present via online technology. He is welcomed to Synod. The chairman explains Art 19. The 2nd report of deputies has replaced the first one.

Report

Br. Meeske explains that, for the control of stipends, the needs of students must be properly evaluated and confirmed with Deputies Theological Training. Both deputies use the same student database.

The costs of Theological Training and Needy students are expensive. For the FRCSA it is R1.1m annually. We look for the best possible training. We are thankful for the help of Canada and Australia. We have the same outcome for all our students, also for those who had a disadvantage in terms of schooling. The church of Christ deserves the very best.

The agreement with CRTS in terms of funding and costs is explained by deputies. It is an investment for the future of the churches.

Question on the FSBF – How do we understand the concept of a forgivable loan for students?

If a student accepts a call overseas it remains a forgivable loan. It is even negotiable if they stop for valid reasons.

Prof. van Vliet: the FSBF does not only support South Africa students, but also students from other countries. The FSBF speaks to a broad cross section of different circumstances. There is a policy because there are students who want to study theology, and have it financed, and they want to stay in Canada which is a soft road for them. But the FSBF assistance comes with terms. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the FRCSA is more specific than the general policy of the FSBF. The MOU have the leading edge when South African students are involved.

Br. Van Vondel explains that Needy Students is a small deputyship. There is good cooperation with DTT.

In the past DTT did not have many students. But today there are several students. This comes with the obligation that the federation must think thoroughly of how these students are going to be used in future. How are we going to use these gifts we received?

What is the role of family and parents?

Direct family members help if they can. They went out of their way to make sacrifices. There are different circumstances. There are basic costs that apply to all students. We have a joint database of all the students. The main difference between DTT and Art. 19 is about the specifics regarding the financial needs of a student. The evaluation of parents' carrying capacity lies with Art. 19. There are differences in how students are funded and helped.

Decision

The Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To function as an independent deputyship that keeps its own accounts and reports independently to Synod.
2. To levy the churches as follows:
 - For 2025: R200 000
 - For 2026: R224 450
 - For 2027: R230 000 To collaborate closely with Deputies Theological Training in order to determine the level of financial support for theological students.
3. To manage funding from our sister-churches abroad in a Biblically responsible way to serve the churches.
4. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.
5. To submit a full report to Synod 2027

Grounds:

1. In order to ensure sound financial management and independent decision-making on funds that are made available by the churches for needy students, Deputies Art 19 should formally function as an independent deputyship, which is held accountable in terms of its own mandate.
2. Our bond of churches should take responsibility for the cost of theological students in partnership with Canadian and Australian churches.

3. As Deputies Theological Training (DTT) largely manage the training program and requirements, their decisions impact on any funding that can be allocated to needy students.
4. DTT receives an average of R900,000 per year from the Australian sister churches. This is sufficient for the costs of both Deputies Theological Training and Deputies Art 19. In future the number of students may decline, which impacts on the financial needs of both Deputyships.
5. When the financial needs of Deputies Art 19 result in a medium-term surplus on their budgets, surplus funds should be transferred to the Treasurer.
6. It must be realised that funding of theological students must be based on medium-to-long term planning. A student who has started in the programme must be guaranteed of the funding for his complete study trajectory (7 years). A surplus in one year may be needed in the following year for the next cohort of students.
7. The three-year timespan between synods may cover significant developments in the churches. To ensure that all Deputies and churches are informed about these developments, halfway through the three-year period an Indaba will be held, at which Deputies present an interim report on their activities.
8. To submit a report to the next synod and to formulate recommendations according to rule 10 and 11 of synod.

16:00 – 16 30 Refreshments

ARTICLE 26: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

(continued)

It is proposed that we accept a possible offer for our churches to have a member on the board of the RTA. This will be done in consultation with CRTS and FRCA.

A lively discussion is held on the importance of theological training in the local context. Half of the churches represented feel strongly that there should be a local training for our students. The one trajectory is not always a good fit for everyone. The one size fits all concept is questioned by some delegates. The Canada trajectory was problematic for some of our students. Although it is one trajectory there is flexibility on the road. It is one trajectory on paper but in practice it functions more like 2 trajectories reflecting the students' specific circumstances. There is also a cap on the number of years that a student may study. We must keep in mind the context we live in.

Prayer before supper

Br. Oscar Makobe reads from Isaiah 40: 1-10. God will punish his enemies and give everlasting peace to his church. We should first seek the peace of God. We are obliged to share this peace with other people. He then leads us in prayer.

18:00 – 19:00 Supper

ARTICLE 27: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

(continued)

Decision

The Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To set an APS according to the requirements of the tertiary education institution that is selected by Deputies as the preferred institution in each locality, and to test applicants' aptitude, competency and intellectual skills.
2. To inform prospective students for theological studies to apply for admission to the theological study program of the FRCSA before the end of January of the year preceding the first study year, and through admission procedures set by Deputies Theological Training.
3. In cases where DTT and mentor(s) conclude that the applicant for theological studies has the potential to successfully complete the program but lacks basic competencies, to enable the student to follow a supportive program that is determined by the DTT in cooperation with the local consistories.
4. In special circumstances, to consider adaptations of this trajectory to fit the particular needs of a student.
5. In collaboration with CRTS to implement online or distance education as offered by CRTS for students who are legitimately prevented from travelling to CRTS. DTT must support students who follow online or hybrid models of tuition through mentors to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged by the online or hybrid model.
6. Deputies must organize a meeting between the various role players in theological training to discuss and formulate a unified vision for theological training in the FRCSA.
7. If an invitation is received to serve on the Board or the Advisory Council of the Reformed Theological Academy (RTA) deputies receive the mandate to accept the invitation.
8. To continue an appropriate mentorship program during the period 2024-2027.
9. To initiate the organisation of annual pastors' conferences.
10. To collaborate closely with Deputies Needy Students (CO Art

- 19) to determine the level of financial support for theological students. Deputies Art 19 will consist of an independent deputy/ies and the treasurer from Deputies Theological Training.
11. To promote theological training among all FRCSA churches through ongoing contacts.
 12. To levy the churches as follows:
 - For 2025: R200 000
 - For 2026: R200 000
 - For 2027: R200 000
 13. To complete the registration of theological training as a Non-Profit Company (NPC), including registration as a Public Benefit Organisation Art 18A institution
 14. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.
 15. To host the Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod. Substitute: Deputies Relations Churches Abroad
 16. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Grounds (note: the grounds were formulated on the following day)

1. Students should enroll at a tertiary education institution that is acceptable within the FRCSA theological training program.

2. Registration at universities starts on 1 April of the preceding year. Generally, universities have limited space in the Humanities Faculty.
3. Deputies want to meet and assess applicants timely in order to advise on the choice of an institution, and on the necessary enrolment procedures.
4. Applicants from a disadvantaged educational background may not satisfy the set standards for enrolment at a specific university. Yet, the Lord may encourage learners to aim for training for the ministry. Such learners should be guided in such a way that it becomes clear whether they have the ability to successfully complete the training program, both academically and spiritually.
5. The trajectory should not be viewed as a 'one size fits all' solution to theological training that has to serve the FRCSA in its multi-cultural and complex socio-economic contexts.
6. Experience over the years has shown that the context and circumstances of South African students may change, and that online tuition may be required.
7. To achieve a more unified vision on theological training, Deputies should consult with pastors and leaders in the FRCSA.
8. Deputies have been in consultation with the curators and principal of RTA and have made input into their planning for implementation of the RTA.
9. Undergraduate students need continuous spiritual and academic support to ensure that they grow in theology and spirituality towards the ministry.

10. The annual pastors' conference is a much-needed opportunity for pastors and students to engage around theological and ecclesial subjects.
11. In principle the separation of the two Deputyships is necessary for clean management and protection of separate mandates.
12. The principle is that theological training in the FRCSA is for the churches, by the churches and under supervision of the churches.
13. Churches must be informed about developments in the training, they must be requested to pray for the training and the students, and they must contribute to the realization of the training program through the synod assessments.
14. The budget for 2024-2027 was approved by the synod.
15. The South African government has made the registration of all educational providers as an NPC compulsory.

Br. Martin de Wit is designated the convenor and will be responsible for convening meetings of the deputies. Br. de Wit will, God willing, return to South Africa at the end of 2024, and Rev. Pieter Boon will in the meantime be the stand-in convenor.

General

Rev. JR Visser wishes synod the Lord's blessing. The Chairman wishes rev. Visser a safe journey back to the Netherlands and a blessed retirement.

Adjournment for the day

We sing Psalm 66: 7-8 and rev. Visser closes this session with prayer and thanksgiving (with translation in English by rev. Bruintjes).

ARTICLE 28: OPENING AND WELCOME

26 September 2024

We sing from Psalm 47: 1 & 2

Br. R Meeske reads from Acts 16: 6-24. The Lord leads the apostles to new avenues and to places they did not expect. This was the first time the gospel was preached in Europe. In Phillippi the Lord opened eyes, hearts and doors. The power of the Spirit draws praise from prisons. In prison Paul and his fellow inmates praise the Lord. Do we also praise the Lord in difficult circumstances?

The conversion of Lydia and her family and of the prison guard and his family. The fact that the gospel was preached in Europe is significant for us because our roots lie in Europe.

He then leads us in prayer for wisdom for the day's work of Synod and thanked the Lord for the brotherhood we received from all over all the world.

The chair welcomes rev. Anton Dednam, deputy for ecumenicity from the RCSA.

He also welcomes deputy Treasurer br. Richardt Hoving and Mission deputy br. Sietze Snijder.

ARTICLE 29: DEPUTY TREASURER

Report

The committee for budgets presents an overview of the finances of the federation and a proposed budget for the period of 2025-2027.

The chairman thanks the committee for their work. Clarifying questions are asked and discussed.

Synod receives a report and a financial audit of the federation's finances. The treasurer gives an overview of his work. This includes how the proposed contributions for churches were calculated. Newly instituted churches are also included in the projections. He also presents the income statement and the federation's expenses.

Deliberations

Surplus funds can be managed in the federation. If any deputyships receive money from donors, feedback must be given to donors. Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad can give broad feedback to our donors.

The federational contributions are discussed and finalised. The contribution for each church differs according to each church's financial carrying capacity. A church in a richer area contributes more than a church in a lower income area. This concept is known as the differential funding model. Mission churches also contribute to federational expenses. Individual churches can contact the treasurer if their estimated contributions are not correct.

FICA regulations and how to deal with the registration of the federation as a non-profit company, is discussed.

10:15 – 11:15: Refreshments

A budget committee meeting is held while Synod breaks for refreshments.

After the break we sing from Ps 134: 1

ARTICLE 30: DEPUTY TREASURER (continued)

The budget is presented by br. Hoving.

Deliberations

It is proposed to increase the budget cap to R1 450 000, with a yearly increase of 5%.

Decision

The budget is approved, and the following mandate is given to the new treasurer:

1. To approve the budget for the years 2025-2027 based on a 5% yearly increase.

2025	1,450,000
2026	1,522,500
2027	1,598,625

The Synod re-appoints br. Hoving as deputy with the following mandate:

1. To act as one of the directors of the recently created Non-profit Company (NPC): “Sinodale Kwesor – Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid-Afrika”.
2. To request Classis North and South to appoint one director each for this NPC.

3. As director of the NPC, to uphold all legal and operational requirements as per the laws and regulations of South Africa, which includes:
 - a. Appoint a tax representative.
 - b. Compile the Annual Financial Statements and have them audited and signed by all directors.
 - c. Uphold the CIPC registration.
4. To request Deputies Theological Training, Mission Deputies, and Deputies Article 11 to transfer their current surplus funds to the synod treasurer account.
5. To request full financial statements biannually from Deputies Theological Training, Mission Deputies, Deputies Article 11, and Deputies Article 19 and to report these to Classis North and Classis South.
6. Together with the two directors transfer funds to address the shortfalls in the approved synod budgets.
7. To annually contact Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad (DRCA) to meet with the directors of the NPC to discuss the needs of the churches regarding foreign funding.
8. To submit an interim report to discuss at the Indaba to be held approximately halfway between synod 2024 and the next synod.
9. To submit a report to the next synod and to formulate recommendations according to rule 10 and 11 of synod.

Deputies DTT, Art 11, Art 19 and MDSA receive the added mandate to give proper feedback if money is received from donors. Currently this means that feedback must be given to the FRCA.

ARTICLE 31: DEPUTIES INSPECTION OF THE TREASURER

The synod treasurer audit report is presented to and accepted by Synod.

Decision

Synod decides to accept the report by Deputies Inspection of the Treasurer. In future the work of these deputies will be done by an independent Auditor which will be appointed by the directors of the NPC. (see Article 30 on Synod Treasurer)

ARTICLE 32: MISSION DEPUTIES (continued)

Decision

The synod decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To act in accordance with any Agreement of Co-operation between MDSA and any sponsor.
2. To act in accordance with the “Agreement of Cooperation regarding the mission between the FRCSA churches”.
3. To act in accordance with the “FRCSA policy for supported mission projects”, approved at synod 2017.
4. To levy the churches according to the approved budget:

2025	2026	2027
R 505 000	R 535 000	R 540 000

5. If funds are received from foreign donors, to inform the donors of how these funds are being used.
6. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next synod.

7. To report to the next synod according to the Rules of Synod as adopted by Synod 2024.

ARTICLE 33: DEPUTIES ART 11 (continued)

Grounds

The grounds for these deputies' mandate are presented and accepted by Synod (see pages 60 - 61).

ARTICLE 34: DEPUTIES FOR INSPECTION OF THE ARCHIVE

Decision

Synod decides to accept the report of Deputies Inspection of the Archive.

Synod also decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To examine the synodical archive and archiving system in terms of the synod rules.
2. To take note of the fact that the following section of synod rule 11.5.2 has been removed, as all acts are available electronically: "The Acts of Synod of churches with whom the FRCSA have official sister church relations."
3. To submit a report to the next synod and formulate recommendations according to Article 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

Prayer before lunch

Rev. D Poppe reads from Colossians 3 about the death, resurrection and the future glory of Christ and then leads us in prayer.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

**ARTICLE 35: DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL TRAINING
(continued)**

The grounds for DTT are approved (see page 72-74).

**ARTICLE 36: LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT AND MAYOR OF
TSHWANE**

The proposed letters to the President and the Mayor of Tshwane are read, discussed, approved and signed by all delegates. The stated clerk will send it to the respective offices.

ARTICLE 37: APPOINTMENTS

The committee for appointments Rev. PG Boon and Rev. J Bruintjes, mostly used what the deputies themselves proposed.

Decision

Synod decides to appoint the following members as the respective deputies:

Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad (DRCA)

Br. G Klapwijk (convenor), Rev. J Bruintjes, br. JF Raimond, sr. D van der Linden

ICRC: Rev. P Kgatle and Rev. PG Boon.

Deputies for Contact with Churches in South Africa (DCCSA)

Rev. HH van Alten (convenor), Br. P Bouwman (scribe), Rev. JA Breytenbach,

Rev. GF Mnisi, Rev. BA Matlaela, Br. C Fourie.

Deputies for Bible Translation

Rev. J Bruintjes (convenor), Rev. JA Breytenbach, Br. G Bijker, Sr. A van Rensburg,
Rev. P Kgatle (for Sotho translations), Rev. HH van Alten, Rev. J van der Linden (advisor).

Deputies Liturgical Music

Rev. BA Matlaela, Rev. GF Mnisi, Rev. PG Boon, Rev. J de Beer (convenor), Br. A de Vente,
Br. A van den Berg.

Deputies for Revision of Liturgical Forms and Prayers

Br. F van der Meer (convenor), Br. O Makobe, Br. A van der Lugt (substitute).

Deputies Theological Training (DTT)

Br. M de Wit (Convenor), Sr. M Hamming (treasurer), Rev. PG Boon (Convenor-temp), Sr. G van Dijk, Rev. JA Breytenbach, Rev. J. de Beer, Br. R Ramphabana, Rev. DM Boersma

Advisor: Br. R Meeske

Administrator: Br. G Hagg, Br. D Byker

Secretary: Sr. C Hagg, Sr. C Hordijk

Deputies Art 19

Br. E van Vondel (Convenor), Sr. M Hamming (treasurer DTT), Br. M Boessenkool

Mission Deputies (MDSA)

Br. I Agema (convenor), Br. S Snijder (treasurer), Sr. L Boessenkool (secretary),

Br. M De Vries, Br. J van Rensburg, Rev. J van der Linden (advisor)

Deputies Art 11 Needy Churches

Br. H Pouwels (Convenor), Br. E Raimond, Sr. SM Palare (GG), Br. R Middeljans,

Br. Erik van Renssen, Br. Roelof Hoving, Br. J Maila, Br. L Maleka (F4).

Deputies Art 49 – Classis North

Rev. PG Boon (Convenor), Rev. JA Breytenbach

Substitutes: Rev. BA Matlaela, Rev. GF Mnisi

Deputies Art 49 – Classis South

Rev. DM Boersma (Convenor), Rev. J Bruintjes

Substitutes: Rev. P Abrahams, Rev. J de Beer

Deputies for Inspection of the Archive

Br. M Ros

Substitute: Br. F van Dijk

Deputies Internet and Webmaster

Br. F van Dijk (Convenor), Br. S Jansen, Br. J van Rensburg, Br. C Meyer

Advisors: Br. G Bijker, Rev. J de Beer.

Deputy Treasurer

Br. WR Hoving

Substitute: Br. A van der Linden

Stated Clerk and Archive

Br. A Smit

Archive Church

Church of Pretoria

Classis for Days of Prayer Art 69

Classis North

Deputies for organising the Indaba

Deputies Theological Training

Substitute: Deputies Relations Churches Abroad

Next Synod

Convening church: Johannesburg (Classis South)

Substitute: Wesbank (Classis South)

Date: God willing between Augustus and October 2027

Rev. PG Boon thanks br. Kees Roose for the many years of service as Stated Clerk (Administrator) and wishes him the Lord's blessings for the future.

ARTICLE 38: PERSONAL QUESTION PERIOD

The delegates are given the opportunity to raise personal questions. This is used by some delegates. Details of this session can be requested from the stated clerk.

ARTICLE 39: ART 48 QUESTION PERIOD

Nobody makes use of Art 48 question period.

ARTICLE 40: APPROVAL OF PRESS RELEASE

The press release will be drafted by the deputy-chairman and finalised in consultation with the chairman and the scribe. It will then be sent to the churches and the monthly bulletin Kompas for publication.

ARTICLE 41: APPROVAL AND PRINTING OF SYNOD ACTS

The Acts of Synod will be compiled by the scribe and edited by the Moderamen. The Stated Clerk will arrange for printing of the Acts

ARTICLE 42: THANKSGIVINGS

The overseas delegates express their gratitude for the brotherly way in which the Synod was conducted and for the hospitality of the Maranata church. The churches are encouraged to take each step in faith. You punch above your weight. Sin and systemic pressure are the same in Canada. We will take good care of your men.

The chairman thanks the overseas delegates for all their valuable inputs during Synod. We have enjoyed the interaction with them.

Synod clerks are thanked for their work at Synod. Delegates are thanked for their work at Synod. We work in dependence on the Lord. The deputy chairman thanks the chairman for the diligent and wise way in which he led the proceedings of Synod.

The chairman thanks the congregations of Maranata and Mamelodi for their organising of Synod. Especially to the leading coordinator, br. F vd Dijk, as well as the brothers who were involved in security. A special thanks to all the sisters who arranged and prepared the meals and who treated the delegates as kings. Br. F vd Dijk presents synod with a slideshow of pictures showing the activities of Synod. Afterwards everyone receives a group photo of the delegates.

ARTICLE 43: CLOSING DEVOTION

Rev. GF Mnisi reads from Colossians 4 and reminds us of the importance of prayers. We may wrestle with God in prayer. You are the greatest when you are on your knees. Make plans but be dependent upon God for his grace and blessings. He then leads us in prayer and thanks God for his grace and mercy and prays for a safe journey home for all the delegates. We sing hymn 40 verse 1, 2, 4 and 5.

ARTICLE 44: CLOSING OF SYNOD

The chairman officially closes the Synod at 16:30.

ADDENDUM 1: REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION OF CREDENTIALS

According to a Letter of Credence from Classis South, dated 13th September 2024 (App. 1), the following delegates to Synod Mamelodi, 2024, were appointed:

Primi: Rev. Dirk Maurits Boersma,
 Rev. Johan Bruintjes, Rev. Carl van Wyk,
 Br. Ronald Meeske, Br. Farentino Koks,
 Br. Desmond Petersen.

Secundi: Rev. Jaco de Beer, Br. Nico Breyl,
 Br. Cobus Bron, Br. Herman van der Linden.

At the opening session of Synod, the following brothers from Classis South were present according to the Attendance Register:

Rev. Dirk Maurits Boersma, Rev. Johan Bruintjes,
Rev. Jaco de Beer, Br. Ronald Meeske, Br. Farentino Koks,
Br. Desmond Petersen.

Classis South is therefore represented by 6 legally appointed delegates.

Notes: Primus delegate Rev. Carl van Wyk was replaced by secundus delegate Rev. Jaco de Beer.

According to a Letter of Credence from Classis North, dated 19th August 2024 (App. 2), the following delegates to Synod Mamelodi, 2024, were appointed:

Primi: Rev. H H van Alten, Rev. P G Boon,
 Rev. G F Mnisi, Br. O. Makobe,
 Br. L. Mogotsi, Br. F. van der Meer.

Secundi: Rev. S. Matlhokoane, Rev. T Matlaela,
Br. P R Agema, Br. F M Hagg, Br. W Hofsink.

At the opening session of Synod, the following brothers from Classis North were present according to the Attendance Register:

Rev. H H van Alten, Rev. P G Boon, Rev. G F Mnisi,
Br. O Makobe, Br. L Mogotsi, Br. F van der Meer.

Classis North is therefore represented by 6 legally appointed delegates.

Letters of credence were also received from / Information from foreign sister churches was received from:

the Canadian (and American) Reformed Churches, indicating the following appointed delegates:

Dr. Jeff Temple and Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes;

and from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, indicating the following appointed delegates:

Rev. Dirk Poppe and Br. Bert Veenendaal.

At the opening session of Synod, the above-mentioned brothers from our sister churches were all present according to the Attendance Register, while presenting their letters of credence to synod. The Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia are therefore represented by 2 legally appointed delegates from each church federation.

On behalf of the convening church,



C. Roose - Stated Clerk of the FRCSA

ADDENDUM 2: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE FRCA

FRCA Address to Synod Mamelodi 2024

Esteemed brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

We give thanks to God, and it fills us with joy to be present at this assembly of your Free Reformed Churches of South Africa. We kindly thank you for the invitation and are especially joyful because the Lord has opened the way for us to be here after more than 7 years. That is a long time for sisters to be away from each other. Although we had some contact via email, Zoom and behind face masks, that does not come close to the benefits of being here personally and face-to-face. Very thankfully, we did have your delegate at our recent synod in June and many church members are able to travel back and forth during the 7 past years, and in fact, even emigrate in the period of Covid19. Yet the Lord has a purpose in world history and in his church-gathering work, using these circumstances to also build your and our and other churches in Jesus Christ.

Although many of you are familiar with our churches and your deputy just reported on the decisions of our recent synod, I will say a few things about our churches without doubling up on what you already know.

Just over a year ago two new churches were instituted in our bond, namely, Cardup Brook and Comet Bay. That brings us to a total of 18 churches and 1 church plant. In addition to that, a new church, coming out of the churches of Southern River and Kelmscott, will

be instituted next month – the church of Seville Grove. We note also, and what a blessing that is, that a number of your mission churches have now instituted, and more are expecting to soon be instituted. We now have 4 ministerial vacancies but that also can be expected to grow. We share somewhat in that understanding with you that amongst the joy of growth in churches comes the challenge of filling the pulpits – a nice problem to have, isn't it? 😊

Through various local churches we support mission work in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, China and Philippines. We maintain sister church relations with Canadian Reformed Churches, Reformed Churches of New Zealand, Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea, First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore and, of course, yourselves. We continue contacts with URCNA and OPC in North America, Southern Presbyterian Church in Tasmania and are exploring contacts with the Oceania Kosin Presbyterian Church in Australia.

We rejoice at the recent developments in the Netherlands with the merger of the DGK and GKN bonds and we know that are also are keenly following that progress. What a joy to see progress in the unity of faith, especially after the sad and devastating decline of our former sister churches in that country. Again, we are thankful to be witnesses of God's progress in gathering His church. May He bless the various meetings and decisions taking place and also the support that you as churches provide as well as from us.

Our recent synod approved guidelines for guiding the progress of church relations towards a sister church using 3 categories of faithfulness, meaningfulness and manageability. Also approved was a relationship of Ecclesiastical Contact which can serve as a way of remaining in contact where a sister relationship may not be

manageable or as a steppingstone towards sister church relations. Our synod also made the decision to attend the next 2 ICRC meetings as observers.

The FRCA has been richly blessed by our partnership with the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS). At the same time, we are looking forward towards to having our own seminary in the future, should that prove to be feasible. Synod decided to keep working towards an Australian Reformed Theological Seminary (ARTS), with a long-term goal in mind. Deputies are mandated to keep working on this and to further engage our churches in Australia as well as churches in the Asia Pacific Region about this.

On this aspect of theological training and mission, we note that you have much on your agenda to work through. It is a beautiful task to be focussed on the proclamation of the gospel and witness so many people moved by the Spirit to grow in faith. May the Lord give you His wisdom in making decisions, in resourcing it and in the carrying out of these tasks and responsibilities so that the gospel preaching may continue to grow. You have an especially challenging situation with multiple cultures and backgrounds involved in training and mission, but that is also evidence of your response to the calling to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). Our synod accepted your proposal that we continue to prayerfully and financially support theological training, but also mission and needy churches as the needs arise and shift.

In regard to your contact with the Reformed Churches of Africa, we find it interesting how you, in faithfulness, seek to balance the responsibility and engagement of local churches together with exploring how to progress federally as churches the relationship

with the RCA. This is another expression of working towards the unity of the church of Eph 4. May the Lord bless your work that it may, in turn, be a blessing to your local churches and indeed also the churches of the RCA.

In conclusion, may the Lord bless your deliberations and decisions at this synod. May His Spirit be in the midst of your churches

“to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11,12,13).

Thank you.

Br. Bert Veenendaal/Rev. Dirk Poppe

On behalf of Deputies

ADDENDUM 3: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE CANRC

Dear Brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, I bring you greetings as brothers and sisters in Christ. I am here together with my brother in Christ, Rev. Jeff Temple. We thank you for your invitation.

It is a privilege (in more ways than one) to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at your Synod today. As many of you know, I was born and baptized here in South Africa. Though I have spent most of my life in the United States and Canada, I still treasure my South African roots and have a deep love for this country.

In preparing for this Synod, I was struck by the strong and vibrant sister-church relationship we share. I knew we had a common origin in emigration from the Netherlands in the mid-20th century and enjoyed decades of close unity of faith. Today, I am even more encouraged by the vibrant bond we experience.

Before this trip, I spoke with several individuals who liaise with you. A recurring theme in these conversations was, "We trust each other." Brothers, genuine trust is truly a gift of God's grace, especially when it spans an ocean. It reflects our shared belief in the same Lord, the same grounding faith, and the same empowering Spirit. We truly enjoy a familial relationship as sister churches.

Our federation is experiencing a unique dynamic of secular liberalism along with a changing culture due to large-scale immigration. Today, around 1 in 4 Canadians are landed immigrants or permanent residents. Toronto is one of the most multi-ethnic cities in the world. Many say, "the nations have come

to our doorstep.” I think it fair to say that in Canada, “the nations have a place in our home.”

We have a unique opportunity to put into practice our confession of one, holy catholic Church in all her diversity – not only through long-distance sister church relationship, but among members at the local level. In the church where I pastor, we have people from sixteen different countries, and every continent (except Antarctica). How do Koreans, Chinese, Congolese, Ghanaian, Dutch, Jamaican, Brazilian, South African, Australian, and others express true unity of faith in one, holy, catholic church, without each starting their own ethnic church or even federation in Canada. Is it possible? In true faith, I confess it is.

For our federation, this dynamic of secularism and immigration does provide challenge. Some churches experience this dynamic more acutely than others. It’s fair to say we are experiencing growing pains.

As we read your reports, we were very encouraged by their quality. They are robust, well-written, rooted in God’s Word, and display a genuine desire to move the churches onward in all faithfulness to Christ. When I read deputies report on mission, see the diversity in your federation, and witness the multi-lingual approach in this federation, I wonder if this is an area we can learn and encourage each other.

Our committee has been working on developing **new guidelines for ecumenical relations**. This new approach will allow for acknowledging faithful churches, while recognizing the intensity of relationships may differ. We have shared our report with your committee and thank you for your feedback. A final report will be submitted in a couple months for our General Synod.

We continue to closely monitor the ecclesiastical developments in the Netherland. We are encouraged and supportive of the merger of the **De Gereformeerde Kerken** (DGK) and the **Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland** (GKN). We hope to have a delegation at the exceptional synod scheduled for October, and after that point, if we will propose to Synod Abbotsford, meeting next year 2025, that we extend Ecclesiastical Fellowship with them.

We remain thankful for the **Canadian Reformed Seminary** and the current arrangements with your churches (I won't repeat details shared in your own report). This shared education for ministers is one reason our federations (along with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia) are in such close fellowship and trust. Your students are a blessing in our midst; brother Jeff Temple can share more personally, since many students are in the church he pastors.

I do want to emphasize, we are happy to partner in this way, and while it is a blessing for us – our genuine desire is that the arrangement may be a blessing for you. Our churches have responded well to our Foreign Student Bursary Fund request to financially support South African students during their time in Canada. It's clear that our members consider this a worthwhile cause, and we look forward to helping as long as is necessary. I read in your reports of the plans for the Gereformeerde Theological Academy. If our seminary can be of assistance in exploring these local options, please don't hesitate to reach out.

I understand from your reports, that there is some concern around the **future funding for mission**. Regrettably, it seems that there remain barriers to our direct funding of foreign churches mission work. We are thankful for creative ways that have developed over

the years such as the calling of Rev. Ryan Kampen to serve at the Reformation Study Centre, and the Foreign Student Bursary arrangements.

Psalms and hymns for worship remains a discussion in our federation. At Synod 2022, our hymn cap of 100 was maintained, while still allowing for the testing of new versification of some psalms as well as new hymns. Precisely what the shape of proposals at our next Synod will be remains to be seen. I do know that our committee members for the Book of Praise really appreciated your study reports on the matter of hymns. Please pray for unity and faithfulness within our churches on this matter.

The challenge of Bible translations is one we have also encountered. While our Synod does not mandate translations, over the past decades we have moved from recommending the RSV to the NIV1984 to the ESV. Even now as I preach using the ESV, I realize there is no perfect translation. I thank God you have options here, and pray he gives you wisdom as you deliberate on this matter.

Brothers, I want to first encourage open communication. Are there any areas where we have failed to live up to our commitments to you? Do you perceive any areas where our testimony or practice is weak? Please do let us know.

Paul wrote to young Timothy explaining his reasons for writing. He wrote that “you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” 1 Timothy 3:14-17. May you be faithful to

our lord Jesus, may genuine godliness be evident, and may you know how one ought to behave in the household of God. It's a joy to share fellowship with you.

Thank you. Rev. G Bruintjes & Rev. J Temple.

ADDENDUM 4: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN (GK)

By Rev. JR Visser (with real-time translation by Rev. J Bruintjes)

Brothers, I greet you on behalf of the two reformed church federations (GKN & DGK) which have fused into one church federation. The proposed new name for the fused federation is Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken).

You have expressed sadness about the breaking of the relationship with the GKv. The members of our churches also experience sorrow, because there are children, grandchildren, parents and friends who took a different path than the one we have walked together in the past. We as churches want to walk in the same direction/path that you as churches are going. The way that the Lord shows us in his infallible Word. This means splitting with people we love. For that we need encouragement. Especially from those churches with whom we always had a relationship.

We originate from the same churches, always had relations and share a mutual history. Therefore, we call upon you for a deeper encouragement and relationship than what is currently recommended by deputies.

The differences which we had as two federations has been resolved. For example, the relationship with CanRC Abbotsford was ended. An appeal against that decision was rejected.

We desire and request a sister church relation amid the struggle we experience in our Dutch society. We are living in a totally liberated society which do not acknowledge our viewpoints (for

example regarding the LGBTQ movement) and our values as churches.

We also experience attacks from, for example, the Netherland Reformed Churches.

We also need help in connection with theological training. We have 7 theological students. We make use of the CGK's training but there are several questions about their training. Rev. R van der Wolf and I give lectures and mentorship to our students. But we need help from your theological seminary (CRTS), even if we can participate in online lectures in the context of a sister church relationship. We work together with the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Germany where Dr. VE D'Assonville is professor in dogmatics.

We have sister church relationships with two churches, namely SERK (Free Evangelical Reformed Church/Selbständige Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche) a small federation in Heidelberg, Germany, and with the OPC. The OPC offered us the sister church relationship.

We appeal on you for a sister church relationship. This also because many people come from South Africa to the Netherlands. Fortunately, many of them found their way to us, but it will be easier for all if we have a sister church relationship. In conversation with Dr. G Meijer, he requested us if we can receive Reformed Church members who travel or emigrate to the Netherlands.

In conclusion brothers we share the same faith, the same history, and greatly desire unity with your churches en be encouraged by your churches. We consist of 4000 members but is on the frontline to stay true church of Christ.

We pray for you, please pray for us and please come to our help with a sister church relationship.

We greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

ADDENDUM 5: GREETING MESSAGE FROM THE RCSA (GKSA)

Beloved chair and brothers in Christ

I greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ with the well-known words of Paul to the Ephesians:

Grace to you and peace from God our Farther and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a privilege for me to be with you as a synod and to experience your hospitality, but especially your love and dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ. The intimate way that you meet is something which I envy you for and which I wish we as Reformed Churches of South Africa could in some way experience in our synodical meetings.

Brothers... all of us who are here today have been called by God to repentance and faith in Christ. All of us have embraced Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith. All of us have received our faith in Jesus Christ and our salvation through him as a free gift of God, by the effective operation of the regenerating Spirit. That is why we are all members of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus part of the holy universal church.

And yet, you are all here as members of one church federation while I am standing here as representative of another church federation. While we are one in Christ, for more than seventy years we have not lived this unity in our country. With great caution I want to remark that we are a visible representation of what Bavinck has

called *a sin against God, in contrast with the prayer of Christ and caused by the darkness of our reason and lovelessness of our heart*. These are powerful, but also sad words, but they call us – as Bavinck also stated – *to abase ourselves enough because of this division and discord* within the one church of our Lord Jesus Christ!

That is why – while I am with you here in your synod - I am praying for the mercy of our Lord. I am, however, also praying that the Spirit of Christ will guide us and lead us as churches to never cease to seek the realisation of the unity of our churches as the church of Christ.

With this said, I think you will understand why I am silently excited about the proposal of your deputies to accept and approve the memorandum which has been drafted not only *as a truthful description of the status quo of our relationship but also as an acceptable broad roadmap to unity*. Personally, I believe that we should – as Professor Amie van Wyk once wrote – switch of *all non-essential appliances* and make a concerted effort to make progress with the unification of the divided church of Christ. I also pray that we will trust our Lord to fulfil Himself the prayer of Jesus, the prayer that we may be one!

Chair and brothers, I want to congratulate you as moderamen, but also dedicate you to the Lord's grace. I want to pray that our Lord will bless you as synod with his wisdom, his grace and peace. May your discussions about your relationship with our churches contribute to what we have stated in the memorandum:

...(that) we as church communities (can) grow together in Christ in order to also understand the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ together.

From all the brothers and sisters within the GKSA:

May our Lord be with you all!

Rev. Pieter Kurpershoek

(Deputies Ecumenical Affairs: Inland)

ADDENDUM 6: PRESS RELEASE SYNOD MAMELODI OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SA 2024

On Sunday evening 22 September, Synod 2024 of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA) was opened with a prayer meeting in the hosting church, the Free Reformed Church of Mamelodi. Pastor Erik van Alten led the service using Mark 11: 1-26. He encouraged the churches and delegates to look up and follow the Lord of the church. Delegates can so easily be caught up in the administrative aspects of synods that they forget why and for whom they are working.

As delegates and church, we, as servants of Christ, must prayerfully seek His will in all things, and expect everything from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who will turn our barrenness into bearing fruit for his kingdom and for his glory.

Before the blessing, the church united in confessing our faith using the Nicene Creed. This was a powerful moment as children from across the world, different cultures, and different languages expressed the unity of the true faith in the bond of peace.

Each day was opened and closed in worship as we read, sang, and prayed seeking the Lord's guidance for the day, and thanking him for each day. Prayer was also offered up for the churches with whom we have sister church relations, as well as for the RCSA (GKSA).

DEPUTIES FOR RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD (DRCA)

After the executive committee was chosen, synod was constituted. Following some housekeeping matters, synod

deliberated over the report of deputies with churches abroad. Synod expressed deep gratitude to God for our sister church relationships with the Canadian and American Reformed churches (CanRC), and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA). This spiritual unity in Christ Jesus has found visible expression in several different ways, not least among them the use of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS) for our students (and the financial contribution this entails), and for the gracious financial contributions from the FRCA. The unity that we have in Christ was also visible as delegates from both federations were present for the duration of synod and their advice was invaluable.

The chairman also expressed with sadness that this was the first synod in the history of the FRCSA that the Gereformeerde Kerken Vrijgemaakt (GKv) were not represented. When the GKv united with the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK) on May 1, 2023, they ended their sister church relationship with the FRCSA.

Yet out of these churches was formed at first two federations, the De Gereformeerde Kerken (DGK) and the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (GKN) who have decided to be one church federation under the name Gereformeerde Kerken (GK). Synod had the honour of welcoming Rev. Rob Visser on behalf of these churches. After deliberation, Synod decided to extend sister church relationships at the first official synod of these churches in 2026, Lord willing. Hopefully this can be done together with the CanRC and the FRCA.

We also continue to be thankful for the ICRC and the unity of the faith that is expressed in this international body. Synod is thankful that we can host our first regional ICRC in Cape Town in October

2024. This is a means to seek greater unity among the reformed churches spread across the continent of Africa.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (DCCSA)

Regarding our relationship with the churches in South Africa we are grateful for every church that shares the reformed faith with us and continue to desire to seek fellowship with likeminded reformed churches.

This is particularly true of the GKSA churches, as we had the privilege of welcoming Rev. P. Kurpershoek at the synod on behalf of the GKSA. He was given the opportunity to speak, and the synod responded in encouragement and prayer.

Synod decided that that we would cautiously continue to build toward unity with the GKSA churches. The caution was expressed due to the internal struggle that the GKSA are having regarding women in the office of elder and pastor. Nevertheless, synod is thankful that we were able to adopt a memorandum as a basis on which to have further discussions. There was also a framework adopted in which to grow the local contacts.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

As bond of churches, we hold strongly to the cry of the Reformation: “Sola Scriptura”. In this regard we are thankful for the work of the Deputies for Bible Translation. Synod decided to test more intensely the use of the 2020 Bybel Vertaling by using it in the preaching. The reason for this is to receive feedback from the pastors who are familiar with the underlying Greek and Hebrew texts. Synod would also like to alert the churches that the introductions to the respective Bible books in the 2020 Bybel Vertaling are written from a liberal perspective and are not to be

accepted at face value. Nevertheless, we are grateful that the text itself gives no indication of such a bias.

Synod also acknowledged that there are a variety of translations being used in the churches such as the NIV 1984, ESV, Sotho translations among others. Synod encouraged the English medium churches to remain with the English Standard Version (ESV) or the New International Version (1984) for use as a pulpit Bible.

FORMS AND PRAYERS

Our liturgy has historical and theological roots, and we desire everything to be done in “a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor 14:40). Synod gave thanks for the deputies and the work that they put into supporting the churches in this regard.

Synod especially gave thanks for all the work that was put into making available a reprint of the Sepedi liturgical book for the churches, called Puku ya Kereke. This book includes the Three Forms of Unity and all the liturgical forms, and future reprints will also include a translation of the church order in Sepedi. This translation was accepted with thanks.

Synod also decided to ask deputies to study the objections and recommendations received from the churches regarding the 2nd Lord’s Supper Form used withing the GKSA and give a recommendation to Synod 2027.

LITURGICAL MUSIC

In Colossians 3:16 we read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” Synod seeks to support the

churches in obedience to this command, and help the churches understand what this looks like. To do this, synod accepted a document called “Laat die Woord van Christus ryklik in julle woon,” and asked that it also be translated into English. This document is recommended to the local councils and churches, as it answers many of the questions and objections that we may have regarding the singing of hymns.

Synod also acknowledged that we need to support all the churches in guiding them to some kind of approved hymn book. In this regard synod asked deputies to investigate and assist in forming a hymn book for the churches on the Cape Flats.

We continue to test the Lifela tsa Sione for use in the Sotho-speaking churches.

Based on the decisions of previous synods to expand our hymnal based on themes less covered in our hymnal, synod provisionally approved 15 hymns for use in the Afrikaans-speaking churches. Deputies explained that at this point the available Afrikaans Hymnbooks have been exhausted and therefore the likelihood of new hymns is slim at this point.

MISSION DEPUTIES

In obedience to the command of Christ to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:17), synod wants to encourage the local churches to continue to spread the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every church in our federation is called to be a missionary church, and we must not let money dictate when and how we do missions. Mission deputies made clear that funds can be made available if well thought through proposals are sent to them. ZAM has continued to commit to supporting 50% of the

mission (and possible new projects). Synod is grateful for all those who partner with us in spreading the Gospel, and praise God for his abundant provisions.

ARTICLE 11 NEEDY CHURCHES

Synod wants to emphasize that, simply because a church is needy, does not make this church less of a church. In fact, every church is needy and wholly dependent on her Lord for life. Through Deputies article 11 we simply want to fulfil what we have promised together as churches in article 11 of our church order.

Therefore, synod commits to support the local consistories in supporting a minister of the Word according to the guidelines of previous synods. Also here, synod expressed gratitude for the financial contributions of the FRCA.

Because of the growing need in our bond of churches, synod asked the deputies article 11 to organize a meeting with other deputyships to discuss how we as a church federation can continue to grow while at the same time being sustainable. This report will be discussed by the churches and a proposal will be presented at the synod in 2027. We trust that the Lord who builds his church will guide and lead them in this.

THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

We praise the Lord for what He continues to do to raise up students for the ministry of the Word. Synod had the privilege of welcoming Dr. Jason van Vliet to the floor of synod, and he conveyed deep appreciation for the relationship with South Africa and spoke highly of the students that are currently attending CRTS. Synod expressed gratitude for the work of the deputies and for how they have supported the students both in South Africa and in Canada. It was

only 8 years ago that the churches were vacant, and our prayer was that God would raise up pastors to lead the new generation in South Africa.

Rev. Gerard Meijer was welcomed on behalf of the GTA (Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie) that is being started by the GKSA.

Synod discussed the theological vision of the churches regarding theological training and decided to call a meeting to find a unified vision for the churches.

FINANCES

Paul writes to the church of Philippians: “My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” We hear these words echo through to our day as we are so richly supported in our churches, both locally and internationally. Synod wants to encourage all the churches to continue to prioritize the giving for the sake of the preaching and spreading of the gospel. In this regard synod approved the increased budget without putting an undue burden on the churches. The treasurer was thanked for his conscientious work with the funds of the federation.

STATED CLERK

After many years of faithfully serving consecutive synods and making sure that everything is in place for the delegates, the stated clerk, br. Kees Roose, decided to step down. The chairman expressed gratitude for all his work, and the Lord’s blessing going forward.

CLOSING

In closing the foreign delegates spoke words of thanks and appreciation for the work of synod and for all the work that the FRCSA is involved with. The chairman expressed words of appreciation for the church of Mamelodi and for all the work the church of Maranata put into hosting the synod. The sisters were also recognized for all the work that they put in behind the scenes preparing meals and making sure that the delegates were amply supplied for. Appreciation was expressed for how the bothers worked together, and consequently article 48 was not made use of.

Rev. Mnisi closed with the reading of Colossians 4 with a focus on verse 12, “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.” It was God himself who through the prayers of Epaphras caused the church to stand firm in the will of God, mature and fully assured. Rev. Mnisi called the delegates and the churches up to continue in prayerful dependence of God.

In the words of Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”