

## Minutes

### Reformed Family Forum

Johannesburg – 2-5 August 2018

#### 1. Attendance

Church	Representative	e-mail	Telephone	Notes
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## 2. Opening

Rev Kovilan Moodley opened by reading from 2 Corinthians 8, from verse 1: Paul was writing to poor churches, who were suffering, who have been pressurized and yet he wrote about grace and joy – plenty times. Despite their suffering, they were joyful. Despite their poverty, they were able to give abundantly. “Poverty welled up in generosity”. It was because they gave themselves to the Lord. They even begged to be part of the ministry.

## 3. Stories of the participating churches

Each representative was given time to tell the story of his/her church.

**LECSA:** Established 1933, currently 108 congregations of which more than 90 are within Lesotho. Responsible for various institutions, like schools, nursing college, theological college, etc. Historically LECSA

started with mission work in Barotseland (South-Western Zambia); they are still involved. See **Attachment A and B**

**IERA:** Established 1922 (Archibald Patterson of Liverpool started mission, Swiss missionaries also involved. Devastation of 41 years of civil war. More than 600 congregations and 400 ministers, 100 schools, etc. They want to rebuild theological training school at Kinkune. Church is involved in rebuilding of society. Portuguese is national language.

**RCZ (Zim):** See **Attachment C**

**RCZ (Zam):** See Attachment D. Challenges: doctrinal issues, ministers taking church to court, land grab issues, taxes on church income.

**SRC (Swaziland):** See **Attachment E and F**

**RCA:** See **Attachment G**

**DRCA:** They made a declaration that all ministers/elders or deacons must adhere to: to put Christ first. Elders are doing good work. Lots of infighting at the moment. Some tend to love the church more than they love the Lord. Pockets where the relationship improved – like in Botshabelo.

**DRCB:** Political stability and economic growth. Also infighting. In-looking instead of outwards looking church. Many tent making ministers (congregations cannot afford ministers). Close relationship with DRC Northern Cape.

**RCEA:** Established by DRC farmers – currently one of the main stream churches in Kenya. Part of National Council of Churches. 10 Presbyteries, 100 congregations (call the parishes – each with several local congregations. They have church departments, schools, and training centres. They need more dynamic programs especially to reach out to the youth. Financial restrains.

**CCAP Nkhoma:** Almost 130 years old. Population of Malawi grows exponentially – not enough land and resources (water). Deforestation severe. Growth of church is 5% per year, about 10 new congregations are established in a year. Difficult to maintain synod structure of the church – especially the central funding structure. They need more ministers.

**IRM Nova Synod:** Political conflicts remain – big influence on the church. Economy is growing. The country has 28 million people, 50% of those are still young. Resourceful country, but resources are not used properly.

**URCSA:** Important is new GS – A woman! Struggling to be a real multicultural, multilingual church. Widespread church – even in Namibia and Lesotho. Growing church.

**DRC:** Missional transformation important. Challenged by court cases (same sex marriages). Doing wonderful work in terms of missional diaconate.

**IRM Mphatso Synod :** See **Attachment H**

**CCAP (Harare):** See **Attachment I**

**Important trends from all the stories:**

- Stories about the miracles of God (recovering after times of war, stories about reconciliation, the role of elders, perseverance, God's grace, etc.)

- Political influence on churches (war, land and property issues, elections, economy, interference by government, political leadership issues (dictators), etc.) – what role should the church play in terms of its public witness?
- Challenges of theological training – proper training of ministers
- Financial matters/ financial stability (cannot afford ministers, sustain buildings, synod structures and programs, members are poor.)
- Ecological issues – resources are being depleted
- Importance of ecumenical ties
- A reformed response to neo-Pentecostal growth (prosperity faith) – see also dual membership
- Involvement in communities (schools, hospitals, etc.)
- Issues around ministers (young ministers, sustainability, tent making, power, pension schemes, retirement, etc.)
- In-looking (maintenance) in ministry
- Importance of our histories (our stories form part of who we are)
- How to deal with the thing called “Dutch” – contextualising the church versus its tradition
- Importance of ecological issues (climate change, deforestation, lack of water, population growth, etc.)
- How to reach out to the youth
- Theological and Doctrinal issues: what is a congregation? missional diaconate? Public theology? Prophetic witness?
- Gender issues /domestic violence
- Language and cultural issues
- Rapid Urbanisation
- Infighting, power struggles, role of church leaders and ministers – leadership issues
- What exactly is the role of a GS? KPA’s?

#### **4. Meditation by Rev William Zulu**

Rev Zulu reads from John 1:1-16. John’s message is clear: Jesus has been sent by God – he is the Christ and whoever believes in Him, will have live in abundance. Jesus is: the word, one with God, new creation, light, life, source of everything, visible God, etc. The passage is so full of good news, hope!

#### **5. Being a missional church in our respective contexts**

- Some basic feature of being missional / missional transformation
- What is happening in our congregations? Why is it happening? What should happen? What can (practical steps) we do to make it happen?

Gideon presented a PowerPoint on what we understand with the term missional – see **Attachment J**

#### **6. Communications**

Mariette Odendaal explained the benefits of social media. She invited everybody to join some of the Facebook pages she is managing, for instance “getuienisaksie”. She is also showing the RFF Webpage – to be found at: <http://rff.christians.co.za/> An appeal is made that churches must send their stories to the administrative office or directly to Mariëtte Odendaal

#### **7. Role of the GS**

See document by Rev Posholi, Dr Zulu and Me Brown - **Attachment K**

**Some Key Performance Areas:**

- (1) Accountable for all admin (Finances, office management, HR, etc.
- (2) Chief Coordination's Officer
- (3) Information and communication
- (4) Spearhead vision
- (5) Relationships/partnerships/liaison
- (6) Spiritual guidance

**Secrets:**

- (1) Not seeking too much control / control freak
- (2) Do not think out work or take on too much work
- (3) Do not manipulate (policy, books, minutes, etc.)
- (4) Do not create conflict, rather mediate
- (5) Do not become too personally involved – be objective and professional
- (7) Do not neglect self and own family – own spiritual, emotional and physical care and growth
- (8) Seek the advice of mentors (trustworthy persons) and surround yourself with strong people, who will sometimes oppose you.
- (9) Integrity

**8. Public theology**

See the document by Dr Kobus Odendaal – **Attachment L**

**9. A Reformed response to Neo-Pentecostals**

See documents by Dr Hermen Kroesbergen and Dr Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps – **Attachment M and N**

**Discussion on our response:**

1. We must be self – critical. Have we not neglected some issues in our ministry?
2. But we must also be critical about a theology of prosperity that is not biblically based – we must unmask the untruth
3. We must not have too much of a rational spirituality - balance between emotional and rational
4. In our ministry we must also focus on the real needs of people
5. Must have a sound congregational theology
6. Image bearers of Christ – also the cross and not only the resurrection
7. Teach our members good hermeneutics, good theology and knowledge of the Bible
8. Side with the wounded, the suffering people, the victims of injustice
9. Building a caring community, where people belong – pastoral care programs
10. Understand that suffering is not only negative, but also understand what is meant with prosperity
11. Prayer – also meaningful way of praying for the sick and needy within a church service

**10. NetACT**

Rev Nico Mostert explained the contribution that NetAct is making towards theological training. He refers to the webpage <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/theology/Pages/NetACT.aspx> where there is a wealth of information, for example access to Theological books and articles, important research documents, information, etc. Maybe there should also be a workshop with churches to establish

**11. Christian Literature Fund**

The representatives of CLF gave a good presentation on who CLF is, what they do, how they might be able to help. They also introduced some of the relevant publications. CLF representatives will discuss with the individual churches (GS's) how to best market and distribute literature, as well as how to be informed on what literature is actually needed.

The meeting also discussed the production of a catechism. Several churches indicated that they would like to join the project.

## **12. Business meeting**

### **12.1 Minutes previous meeting (2017)**

The minutes were adopted

### **12.2 Joint projects**

#### **12.2.1 Literature**

The following publications are considered:

- servant leadership in Africa (brs Lagat, Moodley and Kachipapa)
- The work of an elder (Brs Hoffmann and Poonyane)
- Thread of radical Islam (consider a scholar to write something)

#### **12.2.2 Pension Scheme**

Churches are invited to contact RFF administration office for advice or if they want to propose something – we need to take care of ministers when they retire. This topic must remain on RFF's agenda.

#### **12.2.3 Conference on reaching out to the youth**

Dr Zulu informs the meeting on an upcoming conference on youth that will convene in Lusaka.

### **12.3 Functioning of RFF**

#### **12.3.1 Constitution**

A new constitution for the RFF is adopted – **see Attachment O**

Pastor Nobre is requested to translate the Constitution in Portuguese

#### **12.3.2 New Executive Committee**

The meeting elected the Following:

Rev Kovilan Moodley (Chairperson)

Rev Nelson Posholi (Vice Chairperson)

Rev Michael Nobre (Additional member)

Secretariat: Kobus Odendaal and Gideon van der Watt

#### **12.3.3 Next Year's meeting:**

Try to arrange next year's meeting on more or less the same dates as this year.

## **13. Closure**

Members expressed their appreciation for the meeting. The meeting was closed with prayer.



Agter, vlnr: Danny Fourie (CLF), Brian Kamwendo (CCAP Nkhoma Sinode, Malawi), Kovilan Moodley (RCA, SA), Alberto Daniels (IERA, Angola), Jonah Lagat ((RCEA, Kenia), Kobus Odendaal (Getuienisaksie, NGK Wes-Kaap - en KGA Kaapstreek sinodes), Charles Juro (RCZ, Zimbabwe), Gustav Claassen (NGK, SA), Charmaine Stofberg (CLF)  
 Middel, vlnr: Arnau van Wyngaard (SRC, Swaziland), Nico Mostert (NetACT), Gabriel Marata (IRM: Novo Sinode, Mosambiek), Andries Hoffman (NGKA, SA), Nelson Posholi (LECSA, Lesotho), Mariëtte Odendaal (Kommunikasiekonsultant), Berlisé Louwrens (CLF)  
 Voor, vlnr: Gideon van der Watt (Vennote in Getuienis, NGK Vrystaat Sinode), Johanna van Wyngaard, William Zulu (RCZ, Zambië), Masilo Pooyane (DRCB, Botswana), Miguel Nobre (IRM, Mphatso Sinode, Mosambiek), Desireé Brown (VGKSA, SA) en Kingstar Chipata (CCAP, Harare Sinode, Zimbabwe)