



Agenda Reformed Family Forum

Andrew Murray Centre for Spirituality (Wellington) 23-26 October 2023

1. Attendance

Address List 2023 Reformed Family Forum

Church	Representative	e-mail	Telephone
(1) CCAP Harare Synod	Rev Kingstar Chipata	kingstarchipata@yahoo.com hresynodgs@gmail.com	+263 4 703719, +263712730408
(2) CCAP Nkhoma Synod	Rev Vasco Kachipapa	ccapnkhomasynod89@gmail.com	+265 997 957 801
(3) Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)	Dr Gustav Claassen	gustavc@ngkerk.org.za	+27 828561943
(4) Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA)	Rev Pule Sejake	psejake1@gmail.com	+27 835945047
(5) Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana (DRCB)	Me Letjani Moatshe	drbsynod@btcmil.co.bw , lmoatshe@gmail.com	+2675777615/630 +26771460321 (office) +26772260977 (personal)
(6) Igreja Evangelica Reformada de Angola (IERA)	Rev Alberto Daniel	adanieldaniel248@gmail.com secretariadogeral.iera@hotmail.com	+244 928 251 318 +244 912 213 291
(7) Igreja Reformada em Mozambique (IRM)			
- Mphatso Synod	Rev Samuel Besitala	samuelbesitala@gmail.com	+258 869644825
- Tumbine Synod	Rev Joao Herbarth	pastor.herbarth@gmail.com irmtumbine@gmail.com	+258 86 130 3554
- Novo Synod	Rev Gabriel Marata	pastor@vivamaputo.org m.almeidachibota@gmail.com	+258843863324
(8) Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa (LECSA)	Rev Martin Masilo Phate	masilophate@gmail.com lecmaseru@ilesotho.com	+266 5849 8447 +26622313942 (Office)
(9) NKST (Nigeria)	Rev Ephraim Mbatere Shir	nksthq@yahoo.com revemshir64@gmail.com	+234 816 991 1934
(10) Reformed Church in Africa (RCA)	Rev Ivan Akash Sirpal	akashsirpal@yahoo.com	+27 836287651
(11) Reformed Church in East Africa (RCEA)	Dr Luka Ariko	rceasynodi@yahoo.com	+254721241400 +254714415032
(12) Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ Zam)	Dr William Zulu	mbusazulu@gmail.com	+260 977 811 090
(13) Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ Zim)	Rev Tafadzwa Masimba	tmasimba@rcz.org.zw	+263772550388

(14) Swaziland Reformed Church (SRC)	Dr Arnau van Wyngaard	wyngaard@lando.co.za	+27829245632
(15) Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA)	Dr Elias Mohnla	gensec.gs@urcsa.org.za Scribe.gs@urcsa.org.za	+27 82 806 7779
Organisation	Representative	e-mail	Telephone
Christian Literature Fund (CLF)	Me Charmaine Stoffberg	Charmaine@clf.co.za	+27 21 8736974
	Me Berlise Louwrens	berlise@clf.co.za	+27 832270211 +27823392740 +27827054636
NetAct	Rev Hannes Theron	office@netactmail.org.za	+27 83 375 8443
Partners in Mission (DRC Free State)	Dr Nico Mostert	missio@ngkvs.co.za	+27 845604671
Witness Ministry (Cape Region)	Dr Daniel de Wet	missio@kaapkerk.co.za	+27 21 9577204
	Me Mariëtte Odendaal	kgakommunikasie@kaapkerk.co.za	+27 37500866

2. Opening

3. Welcoming address – Chair: William Zulu (RCZ)

4. Constituting of the meeting

The executive:

Chair: William Zulu (RCZ)

Vice chair: Luka Ariko (RCEA)

Additional members: Letjani Moatshe (DRCB)

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (2022) (See Addendum I)

6. Good governance as a key to a more sustainable church and church institutions – Sessions led by our guest speaker Taiwo K. Ilesanmi (Executive Director of Leadership Development Initiative)

Sustainable management practices by leadership, boards and officials

Accountability

Human resource identification, mobilization and succession planning (beyond the slash and burn practices)

Internal institutional relations – good governance principles and practices

Donor relations

GS's are Non-Financial managers that needs to function as financial managers

Key pointers that can enhance the managerial skills of a GS

7. Verbal report by each delegate

The meeting gives an opportunity for each of the members to report on developments and challenges within their respective churches.

Meeting to discuss

8. Feedback and report from the regional meeting that was held in Malawi – Vasco Kachipapa

Meeting to discuss

**9. Open discussion on the future of Reformed Theological Education in Africa - Hugenate College
Rector Dr Nelis Niemandt (session will take place at Hugenate College)**

What kind of theological training does the churches need?

What are our church requirements for ministry?

Lay ministers/Tentmaking ministers as option to address financial challenges

How to differentiate between ministerial formation (a function of the church) and theological education (a function of a theological institution)

Training of preaching elders with a joint curriculum

Continuous Theological training for ministers

Can church universities be self-sustainable?

10. Need for a meeting for General Synod's Moderators of the member churches – 2024 in Malawi

Meeting to discuss

11. Other Business

11.1 Discuss the effect of climate change and natural disasters on our churches – We request that CCAP Malawi and the IRM prepare a presentation for the meeting as they are currently under the most pressure regarding natural disasters

11.2 Christian Literature Fund – Dr Mias van Jaarsveld

11.3

12. Next Year's meeting: Propose Malawi, October 2023

13. Closure

Addendum I

Minutes
Reformed Family Forum
eMseni Conference Centre (JHB) 13-16 October 2022

1. In Attendance

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Reformed Family Forum

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(5) Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana (DRCB)	Me Letjani Moatshe	drcbsynod@btcmil.co.bw , lmoatshem@gmail.com	+2675777615/630 +26771460321 (office) +26772260977 (personal)
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(13) Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ Zim)	Rev Tafadzwa Masimba	tmasimba@rcz.org.zw	+263772550388

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (2019)

The meeting reviews the minutes and attention is given to:

12.3 The ecology booklet did not materialise during the past 2 years. An ecology calendar will be added on the Wapp group and already available resources will be shared. Churches are encouraged to engage in setting up task teams or committees to raise awareness and create advocacy within the churches and communities. It is advisable to partner with other churches, NGO's, governments and civic organisations to create awareness and advocacy. The meeting proposed that the theme for the 2023 RFF meeting will be focussed on the ecology and the effect of climate change.

12.5 Pension schemes – we advise that it needs to be dealt with in the respective churches and the regulatory frameworks of the respective countries

12.6 Will be dealt with later in the agenda

12.7 Churches are reminded to respond quickly on requests for submissions. A calendar is proposed for the next year where the important dates of synod meetings and special celebrations are to be listed

Resolution:

Meeting moves to adopt the minutes and the proposals

Proposed by Vaso Kachipapa

Seconded by Kingstar Chipata

6. Covid-19: The challenges we had during the pandemic and the challenges we now have after the pandemic

The meeting gave an opportunity to each of the members to report on developments, challenges, and the aftermath of Covid within their respective churches.

Zambia

Negative:

Occurred huge financial losses and church is still trying to recover

Conducting funerals became a challenge

Positive:

Church learned to take responsibility and explore other options for raising funds

IT platforms became a useful help in reaching the congregants although not everyone had access to online church

Mozambique (Mphatso Synod and Tumbine Synod)

Police brutality increased and people were arrested for not complying to Covid regulations

The Covid regulations incurred high costs in terms of PPE and traveling both outside in inside the country the Covid testing being made compulsory.

Lesotho

Time restrictions hampered church activities and funerals.

On the positive side online presence increased and the church radio station proved to be a source of great help. Country had good response to the vaccination campaign and the church participated in that and also send out regular statements.

This is brief summary of what was reported:

Zimbabwe

RCZ

There was a lot of conflicting theologies going around which made the situation worse.

People were acting out of ignorance, and it worsened the infection rate and death toll

CCAP Harare Synod

Membership declined and so did income

Small businesses suffered as people were not able to sell on the streets

People were very hesitant to vaccinate

Malawi

Conflicting theologies were a huge problem

Tithing increased as contributions via cell phone networks were introduced

Swaziland

Congregations became innovative by limiting attendance inside the churches and putting speakers outside where safe distances could be maintained

Conflicting theologies and conspiracy theories abound that caused a slow vaccination rate

Kenia

Negative

Losses of family member were experienced (Luka lost his brother)

Burials were complicated

Positive

Wider reach of members through phones and internet

Radio and TV stations were established in this time successfully

Testimony of a Muslim who listed to the radio and got saved

Electronic payments of tithes increased tithing

Realisation that the church is bigger than the 4 walls of the buildings

Botswana

Vaccinations went well although the country waited to receive them

Food hampers were distributed to curb the crisis

South Africa

RCA

WhatsApp and Zoom were used widely although many did not have access due to the high cost of data

There were a lot of Covid-related funerals and in cases where whole families passed away

After Covid, the return rate to churches is not that high

The pandemic was followed by severe floods and rioting that caused more damage to communities in KZN

URCSA

Rural congregations suffered the most with lockdown of the churches

The gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" widened during the pandemic

Grateful for outside partners who helped with food

Still is trying to recover financially

DRC

Shutdown of church services had a huge impact on church attendance

Many congregations still struggle to regain attendance numbers

Congregations got involved with food distribution in their local communities

Meeting discusses the conflicting theologies that prevailed during the pandemic. There was an alarming negative response everywhere from youths towards vaccinations. The quick spread of conspiracy theories were experienced everywhere and is a matter of great concern that needs to be addressed by the respective synods.

7. Christian Literature Fund – working towards joint literature projects

Launching of: A Family of Reformed Churches in Africa 2 – Dr van der Watt and Mrs Odendaal. The program for morning were:

1. Introduction Dr Nico Mostert
2. Handing over of books to General Secretaries – Dr Mostert and Dr De Wet
3. Book discussion
 - a. Brief Introduction of book by Mariette Odendaal and Gideon van der Watt
 - b. Panel discussion: Dr Daniel de Wet and Dr William Zulu

Questions:

- (1) Why do you think this is an important book?
- (2) Please explain the book title and cover page – what is significant about it
- (3) What does the history of all the churches tell us?
- (4) As you compiled and wrote the book, what surprised you – what is the “remarkable” element in the title?
- (5) What are the main challenges facing the Family of Reformed churches?
- (6) Some churches grew exponentially, others dwindle – are there some reasons you identified?
- (7) What are the main themes of the respective stories (spiritual and cultural identity, context, agency, leadership and unity)

People from audience can also ask questions – lead the discussion from a focus on the book to a focus on the churches and the challenges they face today.

Resolution:

1. The meeting expresses its appreciation to Dr van der Watt and Mrs Odendaal for preparation of the 2nd edition of the book.
2. We encourage the churches to use the book as part of the church history of our Family and our connectedness to each other.
3. We encourage the members to start working on a third edition that might focus on our unity based on the Trinity and the entrenched African beliefs of ubuntu and community

8. Youth as the future church – Why are we missing the next generation in Reformed Churches? Dr Gustav Claassen introduced Rev Charlotte Sibanyoni as guest speaker for the session.

Topics for discussion:

- Discerning Conflicts of our times: The role of youth in Church and society.
- Africa youth leadership: Building local leaders to solve global challenges.
- Decision-making and the Christian leader, how do we prepare the next generation to become the new leaders of the church?
- Servant Leaders: Teaching how to serve and to love?
- When Tragedy Strikes: From natural disasters to family tragedies, they do occur. How to lead during times of grief?
- Young African leaders: Shaping a future with accountable leadership.
- Witnessing in the 21st Century.

The respective churches share what is happening in terms of youth ministry in their churches.

Resolution:

1. Work towards connecting the respective youth ministers and ministries with the aim of bringing about a youth network within the RFF.
2. Encourage our members to engage with the youths via conferences or brainstorming (by making use of online platforms) etc.

9. What kind of theological training does the churches need?

Dr Nico Mostert gave an overview of the trends in theological education in Africa followed by a discussion. See Addendum IV

Topics that need further discussion are:

What are our church requirements for ministry?

Lay ministers/Tentmaking ministers as an option to address financial challenges

How to differentiate between ministerial formation (a function of the church) and theological education (a function of a theological institution)

Training of preaching elders with a joint curriculum

Continuous Theological training for ministers

Resolution:

1. It is advised that sustainable Theological Training be the topic for a meeting (preferably in person) where the moderators of the respective churches are present.
2. The meeting request the executive committee to investigate the organising of such a meeting
3. Churches are encouraged to follow-up with their respective theological institutions regarding their participation in the NetACT curriculum survey

10. Archive follow-up conversation

A facilitated discussion was held. All are advised of the need for good archival practices to ensure that the churches history is preserved.

11. Follow-up discussion on the role church orders in securing good church governance

The meeting welcomes Dr Dewyk Ungerer, Actuary of the DRC General Synod. The presentation given by him is attached in Addendum II. Issues raised include leadership, good church governance, principles of reformed church polity, mandates being given to church office bearers In line with the King reports in South Africa, we encourage churches not to elect employees of the church in church leadership on Synod level to avoid conflict of interest

Resolution:

1. The meeting wants to thank Dr Ungerer for his time and the insights he brought to the meeting.
2. The members encourage one another to view church order documents as living documents that are to be reviewed regularly to ensure proper governance in our respective churches
3. Ask the secretariat to explore the possibility to include, in the next meeting, the moderators for a continuation of the discussion on good governance in our Reformed Churches
4. Ask the executive committee to investigate the possibility of conducting workshops that can assist the respective churches to better their church governance

12. Greeting messages from local Synod Moderators

Greeting was brought by URCSA: Prof L Modise and DRC Hoëveld Synod: Dr Andre Bartlett

Resolution:

The meeting expresses their gratitude towards the two moderators for taking time to attend the meeting and bringing greetings from their respective churches.

13. Business meeting

13.1 Joint projects

Currently the partnerships are mainly between individual churches and the DRC. Partnerships are not limited so members are encouraged to engage with other members closer to them.

Resolution:

1. It is suggested that for 2023 the respective churches focus on ecumenical visits with their Moderamen members among each other.
2. Explore the possibility of having a zoom conference online that include the moderators and other functionaries
3. We encourage the churches to make use of the speakers from the meeting to assist on local level
4. Review the suggested KPA's and tasks for a GS and provide feedback and comments (prepare a possible handover sheet for departing GS's) before end of 2022 (see addendum II)

13.2 Literature

The Tell Tell series developed by CLF is available for use in English. Members are encouraged to contact CLF and enquire about the possibilities to obtain the rights to print the books in their respective countries for use. There is a cost involved which should be covered by the respective churches. It is suggested that for the 2023 meeting, the churches are to present material that can of use by all. It will then be reviewed by all, and the possibilities explored of involving CLF in assisting with the publication for use by all. The focus will be material that is written in English.

13.3 Functioning of RFF – the way forward

13.3.1 Constitution – See Addendum I

The constitution is reviewed, and no changes is adopted. The current copy will be language edited and included in the minutes.

13.3.2 New Executive Committee (election)

The elects the following persons to serve on the executive meeting:

Chair: William Zulu (RCZ)

Vice chair: Luka Ariko (RCEA)

Additional members: Letjani Moatshe (DRCB)

13.3.3 Financial contributions – Western Cape and Free State Synod

The cost for the 2022 Meeting expresses their appreciation to the two synods for their financial support of the RFF meeting

13.3.4 Next Year's meeting: Propose Malawi, 12-15 October 2023

Topics for the conference:

Finances for non-financial managers

Good governance

Ecology and climate change

Resolution:

Guest speakers will be asked to introduce the topics and two additional papers on the topic will be prepared and presented by 2 GS's

14. WCC Feedback session

Feedback is given from the members who were attending the meeting. Desiree Brown, Tafadzwa Masimba, William Zulu and Nico Mostert. See Addendum III for pastoral letter coming from the WCC.

Resolution:

1. The meeting conveys its congratulations to Prof Jerry Pillay of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa upon his appointment as the new General Secretary of the World Council Churches
2. The meeting conveys its congratulations to William Zulu and Gustav Claassen for their election to serve on the Central Committee of the World Council Churches

15. Closure

