

Minutes

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
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(14) Swaziland Reformed Church (SRC)	Dr Arnau van Wyngaard	wyngaard@lando.co.za	+27829245632
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Resonate Global Ministries	Dr Ryan Faber	rfaber@crcna.org	+260 97 6945813

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)

Members not in attendance:

Reformed Church in Swaziland: A new GS was elected and will attend the next meeting.

NKST (Nigeria): we did not receive any information from them

Rev Tafadzwa Masimba: Rev Christoher Manikwa attended on behalf of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe

Dr Mias van Jaarsveld attended on behalf the CLF

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (2022) see addendum 1

Minutes were adopted

Proposed by: Me Letjani Moatshe

Seconded by: Dr Luka Ariko

Matters from the minutes:

8.2 Youth

Rev Kachipapa will take the lead to compile a wapp group and then proceed to organise a zoom fellowship with the respective youth leaders. GS's are requested to provide the contact details of youth leaders and interested parties to Rev Kachipapa. The time line is 1st Nov to organise the zoom fellowship.

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)

Topics that were covered included:

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

The presenter notes will be attached to the minutes.

Resolution: The meeting expresses their gratitude towards Rev Taiwo K. Ilesanmi for his insightful engagement with the RFF group.

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.

Zambia

(RCZ)

Church is founded in 1899.

1.2m current membership spread over the whole country with 19 Presbyteries and

230 established congregations with 200 ordained ministers and 34 evangelists

Past 2 years 15 new congregations were established from previous preaching points.

There are 2000 prospective congregations identified.

Zambian economic situation not good and it effects the church.

Have a decentralised payment system for ministers, congregations need to pay the stipend to pastors.

Various schools and 2 hospitals are part of the churches works.

JMU is the training centre of the church, but it faces serious difficulties in terms of finances and governance.

A Serious challenge is pension provision for pastors. Covid prevented retirees to receive their gratuity benefits and the church ran into arrears, it was cleared now and the whole church is asked to pay towards these gratuities annually.

Zimbabwe

(RCZ)

2022 new leadership were elected (Moderator and GS were retained for a second term)

There is a strategic plan in place that guides the church up to 2025 (it is the 2nd plan in the churches history)

Various committees do the work in the church.

Church was planted in 1891 by the DRC.

Hospitals are administered together with partners, and one is specialising in eyecare.

There is a 2-tier paying system in place serving both medical aid patients and non-medical aid patients.

There are various mission schools still in church care.

The church is assisted by various departments.

95 000 members currently in 130 congregations

Church have formally adopted woman in office, but they are not getting called by congregations. This remains a problem I the church.

Diaspora of the RC: 2 congregations is in SA and one in both the UK and Australia (all with pastors) church also lost 15 pastors to migration.

A Difference exist between remuneration in rural and urban settings of pastors.

(CCAP Harare Synod)

8794 members, 4 presbyteries, 34 congregations and 26 pastors

4 schools

Pastor serves 4 years then name is put on the list for calling, if not called, then he is posted.

Central fund where congregations contribute to, and pastors are being paid centrally from the fund.

There is a pension scheme but no medical aid.

Have members in SA but no congregations here, members are encouraged to join other CCAP churches. Already in existence in SA.

Starting a congregation in London.

JMU and Zomba trains pastors. Starting with own theological college for training but it is not easy and is costing more than to train students in other places.

Kenia

Founded by immigrant farmers from SA. Not a missionary founding but farmers who ministered to their workers.

Not many congregations mainly found in western Kenia in the Eldoret area.

110 parishes (about 800 congregations joint together served by a pastor and evangelist)

180 minsters (not all are in congregations)

170 presbyteries who form the synod.

1 Training facility for pastors (RITT) that train up to diploma level and they have an agreement with SPU for university (graduate) training.

2 health centres with no government aid or assistance

Congregations pay salary via a central payment system.

Retirement is a single lumpsum remuneration.

All Kenyans pay towards a government medical scheme and have healthcare benefits.

Active property development strategy to develop properties to improve income to support the synod office not to incur expenses to the church.

Woman are posted by Synod to congregations.

Mozambique IRM

(Mphatso Synod central area and Tumbine Synod in the North)

3 synods combine the General Synod

86 congregations with 96 pastors

Pastors are called and allocated, use both for congregation service.

Congregations are to support pastors.

Young pastors serve in rural areas but they find it hard.

(Novo Synod)

Small church in south 20 pastors 4 evangelist and 3 missionaries

Make use of more evangelists after 1 year training because they have many older pastors who are close to retirement.

Structure of the church is not helping with ministry.

Pastors have other income projects because churches cannot support them.

Changed strategy to work from big cities outwards to reaching out to the rural areas.

Pension fund is still in SA and is in the process to move it to Mozambique.

A Lot of issues exist with getting pension money from SA to Mozambique

Theological training a problem

Political situation is not good now with turmoil after the last elections.

There are voices calling for war again and that cannot happen again in the country.

Lesotho

110 parishes each one made from various congregations with 102 pastors serving them.

Synod has a building fund to build a house when you retire.

There is a burial fund and a monthly retirement fund for retirees.

There is a hospital and a nursing training school.

Challenges in the church: slow return of members to church services after Covid.

Huge unemployment due to the import of second-hand clothes from Europe (factories closed in the country)

Political instability currently in the country.

Many female pastors in the church but not without problems especially in the mountain areas where they are not accepted, and work conditions is difficult.

In 2024 the church will celebrate its 200th celebration by honouring the pastors who composed the national anthem.

Have a theological school for training pastors at Morija and the church is funding it so that students do not pay tuition.

Malawi

(CCAP Nkhoma Synod)

648 000 members, 228 congregations in 27 presbyteries with 226 ministers

Membership is decreasing church is investigating this phenomena.

Have a lot of widows of pastors in the church so the church did a survey as to why is this happening as pastors die at younger age.

University of Nkhoma is posing some problems to the church with a VC and registrar that are disconnected with the church as they are not members of the church.

This led to the university incurring great financial debts and the Synod is deep trouble with close to \$1.5m in debt. Not only the University but also some departments of the church has occurred huge debts.

Owes the PAYE and other institutions this money through the various departments in the church.

Nkhoma hospital is expanding currently 220 beds with the status of training surgeons.

This brings good news to the church.

Trying to revive the relief and development arm (it was closed due to misappropriation of donor funds)

Climate change is causing major disruptions in Malawi.

Church needs to address climate change issues.

Swaziland

No report

Botswana

One of the oldest churches in the country founded in 1877 and situated in the southern part of the country.

3180 members in the church but Botswana has a very low population rate and church membership is dwindling.

Survey is currently being done to determine why membership is not growing.

5 ministers were inducted recently.

22 congregations and 18 ministers (8 congregations has no ministers due to affordability as the congregations cannot support them)

12 ministers are on part time basis thus supporting themselves.

There are 4 student ministers in training.

There is no pension fund and no medical aid currently for pastors.

Two centres: school for the blind and a school of vocational training.

Youth is not active in the church and participation is low.

Men are not good church attendees in Botswana hence the forming of the Christian men's ministry. It has a positive effect on men's church attendance.

Woman's ministry is very active in church life.

Angola

IRERA was founded in 1922.

6 Provincial Synods, have several communities outside Angola with about 3m members and 604 congregations with 304 pastors

Theological school needs rebuilding in Kikuni

Need to rebuild theological school and build medical centres.

South Africa

RCA

Extension of the DRC's work among Indian people in SA which started in 1968 but the oldest church building dates to 1946.

9 congregations in total with more or less 2000 members

9 ministers and 1 spiritual workers (3 are older than 65)

Church council should take care of ministers with salary scales set by synod.

No centralised system so most ministers are on wife's medical aid.

Losing members to migration out of SA

Training is a challenge with church looking at various options to train ministers.

ID of the church is very important especially the ministry of deliverance.

In the past most work was done by evangelist (an office in the church) who are not that highly trained

Cannot be a church in isolation although it maintains a more conservative view theologically.

Benefit a lot by being among the family members in the RFF.

URCSA

Formed in 1994 as a unification between the old "coloured" (NG Sendingkerk) and "black" church (NG Kerk in Afrika) who was part of the racially divided past of SA.

7 synods in total that includes Namibia and Lesotho (part of Free State Synod)

Cape Synod the biggest 237 congregations 42 Presbyteries

Total: 810 congregations drop is due to a lot of mergers between congregations with wards being formed where congregations once were.

Currently 1.2m members on the books

In the past DRC paid many salaries to pastors but that has changed as it created a lot of dependency.

450 pastors with about 60% that are part time.

Urban congregations are getting stronger and more affluent while pastors in rural and poor settings are getting poorer.

Training at 3 SA universities plus UNISA for those who want to study part time due to having a steady job.

More older people going for studies, but they are close to retirement age and cannot serve long.

Huge lack of pastors for congregations.

Properties are a big issue causing a lot of conflict with some illicit sales that took place in the past.

Huge effort to get the properties of the church to be retained and properly managed to bring income to the church.

Age of retirement is an issue of content – church stick to 65 as age of retirement.

NGKA

Consist of a policymaking General Synod with 4 regional synods (one currently under suspension)

+/-200 congregations in the 4 regional synods with 46 pastors and 4 proponents (candidate ministers)

LGBTQ discussion is prevalent in the synod but it was decided to refer it to the regional synods for discussion

Regional synods have decision making power.

Theological training remains problematic for the church.

Struggle with the update of pastors and congregational information

There is a lot of “mushroom” organisation’s and groups coming into the church from outside the church

Tentmaker ministers (not fulltime in congregations have another job) are not always adhering to church policies and practices hence causing tensions in the church.

Congregations are responsible for payment of salaries, but General Synod determines the salary scale.

General Synod to make sure that there are contributions towards a pension fund for the pastor there is not a Synodical fund.

DRC

1200 pastors with many who are over just under or just over the age of 65 so they are entering retirement age.

Not enough young people coming for ministerial training.

Pastors must have a MDiv degree for acceptance into ministry.

Many pastors immigrate to other churches overseas (16 alone in 2023)

1000 congregations with about 900-900 500 members spanning into Namibia, Botswana, London, Australia, and New Zealand.

Church is hit hard by immigration of younger people and couples thus the church is becoming an older church with an average age of 57 among members.

Church still believes in our calling and missional transformation in our ecclesiology.

We try to make a difference in the country and communities.

Church does a lot of research and this research showed that missional diaconate is very high in what congregations are doing in communities.

Ecumenical ties and relations are growing.

Hugenote college was revived by the church to train social workers for the SA context and devised courses to help train ethical leadership for the country in all sectors of life.

Meeting discusses the possibility of having a structured set of questions to report on.

Resolution: Referred to the executive to discuss the format of reporting for the next meeting and give feedback.

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

See report Addendum 2

Resolution: The meeting takes note of the report and also take note of a similar meeting (just more regional among regional synods) that took place in the Free State.

The group brings to the attention of the meeting the following issues:

Higher education in our training institutions

Climate change and the effects on our churches and members who largely depends on agriculture for their existence.

The future of youth participation in the churches

9. Open discussion on the future of Reformed Theological Education in Africa - Hugenote College Rector Dr Nelis Niemandt (session will take place at Hugenote 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/development for ministers

Can church universities be self-sustainable?

Resolution:

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

Resolution: It is proposed that a separate meeting be initiated for Moderators of the family to meet where the family ties can be strengthened and discussed.

We request the Moderators of the DRC and the RCZ Zambia to initiate a zoom meeting for moderators to discuss a way forward and to determine the need among the respective moderators.

We request the respective churches to budget for in case there is a decision to have such meeting in person.

We reiterate that the GS forum meeting is focused on the training and empowering of the GS's to serve their respective churches better regarding administration and management.

We reiterate that the meeting is a discussion forum and not a legislative discussion making meeting.

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 to prepare a presentation for the meeting as they are currently under the most pressure regarding natural disasters.

Church is exposed to the climate change issues with too much rains and droughts reoccurring

In Mozambique cyclones are becoming increasingly regular almost annual

This causes a lot of displacements of people.

Deforestation is a big problem, but it is caused by people trying to make a living from selling charcoal etc. it is escalating in people also cutting fruit trees and natural growing trees.

Charcoal is used widely for cooking and heat, so people sustain themselves buy selling it to supply in the demand.

Church has a role to educated people on the effects of deforestation and wrong farming methods.

Church is trying to find solutions.

Malawi saw about 1000 deaths, lots of property damage and crop destruction leaving people starving.

Deforestation of mountains expose people to mudslides which causes deaths and destruction.

Government wants to move people, but people does not want to move.

Reserves and national parks and game reserves has also been subject to deforestation.

Community leaders are not doing their part in preserving the forests that are under their control.

Church is engaging community leaders to preserve scrubs and replant trees.

Preserving and protecting scrubs from cutting and burning is the best way to get the trees to grow.

Church and community leaders should be on the same level in protection of land and punishing the culprits.

Engaging also in better farming practices is high in the agenda of the church.

Resolution: Executive to discuss how this can be the theme for the 2024 meeting.

11.2 Christian Literature Fund – Dr Mias van Jaarsveld

An overview is given of upcoming publications that the CLF envisioning. There is a book planned on Authentic African Theology and a book on climate change. Churches are requested to contribute to these books with content and authors that can contribute. We are minded that the church has agency and the call by God to take care of nature.

11.3 Dr Frederik Marais

He reports on developments regarding theological training in the DRC and the various tracks for ordination that the DRC embarked on.

11.4 Greetings from the Moderator of the Western Cape Synod Rev Marinus Theron

See Addendum 3

12. Next Year's meeting: Propose Malawi, a date will be set by the executive for 2024

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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Not attended:

NKST (Nigeria)	Rev Ephraim Mbateren Shir
Igreja Reformada em Mozambique (IRM)	Rev Gabriel Marata
Novo Synod	
Igreja Evangelica Reformada de Angola (IERA)	Rev Alberto Daniel

Resolution:

The meeting expresses their condolences with passing the grandfather of Rev Alberto Daniel.

2. Opening

3. Welcoming address – William Zulu RC Zambia

Ps 23

4. Constituting of the meeting

From the 2019 minutes:

12.9 New Executive Committee

Chairperson: Rev Nelson Posholi

Vice Chairperson: Mrs Tebatso Menyatso

Additional member: Dr Miguel Nobre

The offices of Drs Odendaal, Van der Watt and Claassen will take joint responsibility for the secretariat

Resolution:

1. Since there was no meeting for the past two years, and many of the office bearers elected on the previous meeting has since retired from their positions, the meeting approve that Rev Posholi chair the meeting until a new executive is elected at the end of the meeting.
2. The meeting expresses their gratitude to Dr Gideon van der Watt and Dr Kobus Odendaal for their service to the RFF. The meeting take note that Dr Nico Mostert and Dr Daniel de Wet are now the new persons in the respective offices.

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 was 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 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 requests 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 church's 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

Addendum 2

THE REPORT ON THE REGIONAL REFORMED FAMILY FORUM MEETING HELD IN MALAWI AT MUTHETO LODGE IN AREA 36 FROM 25TH TO 27TH JULY 2023

ATTENDANCE

NO	NAME OF CHURCH	REPRESENTATIVE	EMAIL ADDRESS
1	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Nkhoma Synod	Rev Vasco Kachipapa	ccapnkhomasynod89@gmail.com
2	Igreja Reformada em Mozambique (IRM) Mphatso Synod	Rev Samuel Besitala	samuelbesitala@gmail.com
3	Igreja Reformada em Mozambique (IRM) Tumbine Synod	Rev Joao Herbarth	pastor.herbath@gmail.com irmtumbine@gmail.com
4	Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)	Dr Luka Ariko	rceasynodi@yahoo.com
5	Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ Zambia)	Dr William Zulu	mbusazulu@gmail.com
6	Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (RCZ Zimbabwe)	Rev Tafadzwa Masimba	tmasimba@rcz.org.zw

We started by sharing the reports from our Synods. Then the Synod Vice Moderator CCAP Nkhoma Synod came to greet the meeting. In his words, he requested the inclusion of Moderators in our meetings once in a while. He also appreciated the role that General Secretaries play in our respective Synods.

Resolution: *The meeting agreed to invite the Moderators in our next RFF Regional meeting. That meeting may also include Youth Directors and Heads of Colleges and Universities.*

WE AGREED TO FOCUS ON FOUR PRESENTATION

1. Presentation on Youth and Children Ministry done by the former Synod Youth Director; Rev Richard Kapanda

Resolution: *Youth Directors within our Synods to be connected, network and make exchange visits and joint programs*

2. Church response to climate, a presentation was done by the officer from the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services in Malawi

Resolution: *Synods to actively involved in fighting against climate change. Synods to connect with department of meteorological services in our respective countries to access well detailed first hand updates on weather and climate change information to help us formulate our programs.*

3. Future of theological training versus other course in our universities by the VC of Nkhoma University

Resolution: *The presentation revealed that we have common problems and we agreed to connect the Heads of our college and universities to corroborate, network and share ideas and materials*

4. Social Media, a powerful tool for influencers by a consultant from CNM Communications.

Resolution: *The presentation revealed that the church has influence but fails to use the social media platform. Those who are using social media are reaching out to masses of people across their geographical boundaries, religion and culture and yet their messages are not as life-changing as that of the church. We agreed to explore ways how the church should make use of social media to influence people with the gospel.*

The participants had an opportunity to visit the Headquarters of Nkhoma Synod

MESSAGE AND GREETINGS TO REFORMED FAMILY FORUM 2023

Dear sisters and brothers,

On behalve of the moderature of the Dutch Reformed Church Western Cape Synod, I greet you in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We trust that the Lord, by His grace and wisdom, will give all of us the insight, guidance and resilience to be good leaders in the church in this challenging time.

As moderature we have a deep appreciation for the legacy of previous leaders. We are committed to continue the good work that the Lord has done through them.

The central focus of our leadership in this term - is to support congregations and more specifically - **the missional transformation of congregations** as co-workers of Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God - to the benefit of their communities. Some of the lessons we learned during the Covid pandemic was the fact that we are **stronger together** as communities, when the family of churches work together in **networks**. We are deeply inspired and convinced that we have a **shared calling** as followers of Jesus Christ.

Therefor, **our ecumenical relationships are precious** to us.

I was privileged to visit our church family in Zambia (RCZ), Malawi (CCAP) and Mozambique (IRM) recently, together with our colleagues from the DRC synod of the Free State.

You are an inspiration to us and we thank God for your example of discipleship! *****

I want to close our greetings with the words of Paul in Ephesians 3: 14-21:

'For this reason I fall on my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith.

I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, so that you, together with all God`s people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ`s love. Yes, may you come to know His love – although it can never be fully known – and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

To Him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen

May the Lord bless you. May this meeting bare many fruit.

