

UNITING REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

DECISION REGISTER

OF SYNODICAL COMMISSION (SC) MEETING HELD AT
GOURIKWA RESERVE, GOURITSMOND
16 - 18 July 2019

MODERAMEN REPORT

Decision 4 - The Calvyn Protestant Church (CPC)

SC approved the following process:

- 1 URCSA Cape will provide a working document about the history of the CPC.
- 2 The CPC will also provide a working document about the history of the CPC.
- 3 These two documents will help to frame the conversation and to draw up a draft document for working together.
- 4 The SC takes note of the working document about the history of the CPC. **NOTED**

Decision 8 - The Western Cape Ecumenical Network (WCEN)

The SC endorses Synod's membership of the Western Cape Ecumenical Network (WCEN).

Decision 10 - The Acta of Synod 2018

The first print of the ACTA will only be available in English. Each congregation will receive one copy of the ACTA. The English translation of the ACTA will also be available on the Cape Synod website. Afrikaans and Xhosa translations of the ACTA will be available on request.

Decision 47: United Ministry and accountability

The SC requests the URCSA Cape Moderamen to take initiative regarding church unity on local and synod level with renewed urgency.

Decision 67: Email addresses

As far as possible the service provider of congregations and the church's head-office should be used in email addresses.

REPORT OF THE SUPPORT MINISTRY FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (SMFA)

Decision 12 – Bet-El Campsite

Congregations are encouraged to make use of the campsite in order to raise funds for the Congregational Ministries.

Decision 13 – Bet-El Farm

The Synodical Commission Cape instructs the SMFA to open a criminal case against Mr. A.E.C. Langenhoven followed by a civil claim case to recover the R184 063.50 Mr. Langenhoven owes to the church.

Decision 14 – Audit of properties

The Synodical Commission instructs the SMFA to compile a complete audit of all the properties owned and used by the church and then verify their ownership and usage. In the meantime, ask Rev G Baartman to go ahead and study a Property Management Course. The SMFA to also investigate the possibility of URCSA Cape establishing a Commercial Property Development entity that can develop the properties of the church and later commercial property development.

Decision 15 – Municipal Account

With regards to Municipal account the Synodical Commission request the SMFA to solicit legal advice from the church's legal counsel so that the church can negotiate a waiver or discount on the money owed to the municipality.

Decision 16 – Rev Willie Dreyer

SC acknowledge with appreciation the work done by Rev Willie Dreyer at the Steintal Estate and we wish him well with his retirement.

Decision 18 – Audited Statements

Presbyteries must please ensure that congregations sent their Audited statements (Form A) to the office by the end of June as stated in the Church Order.

Decision 19 – Formula of incentives

SC gives mandate to SMFA to work out a formula of incentives for congregations which are in arrears, so that they'll be able to reduce their debt to synod.

SYNODICAL OFFERINGS

SMFA discussed the proposed new formulas for the calculations for Synodical offerings. SC had a lengthy discussion on this matter. SC agreed that the implementation of a new formula will be postponed until the next SC meeting. In the meantime, all SC representatives must communicate the proposed formulas to their Presbyteries for discussion. Outstanding Synodical offerings should be included in the agenda at annual Presbytery meetings.

REPORT OF CAPE EMPOWERMENT TRUST

Decision 21

Congregations are encouraged to apply for funding for the Lifestyle (Bright Star) Programme which is presented by the Industrial Ministry as this programme has a very positive impact on the lives of young people, who may also become facilitators when they enrol for the Facilitator course. Congregations can only benefit by this as the course focuses on leadership development.

Congregations are encouraged to apply for funding and recruit their young members so that they can participate in the training courses that CABS presents. Most of the venues are at our congregations.

REPORT OF THE SUPPORT MINISTRY FOR JUDICIAL MATTERS (SMJM)

Decision 23 - Retention of status after retirement

The SC approved the following applications for the retention of status as ministers of the Word: Rev J De Wet and Rev J Dreyer.

Decision 24 - Register for Ministers

- 1 The SC expresses its gratitude towards those ministers who have already registered.
- 2 The SC instructs Presbyteries not to approve a call if the minister or proponent is not registered.
- 3 Presbyteries are requested to do a re-check whether everybody within the Presbyterian boundaries has been registered and please send the documents to the regional Actuaris for processing and for record keeping purposes.

Decision 25 - Referral of complaints or disputes to the SMJM

- 1 The SC decides that the SMJM cannot deal with complaints/ disputes that should have been referred to the Church Council, Presbytery or the Reverend involved.
- 2 The SC decides that aggrieved parties must put their complaints on the table of the Church Council or the Presbytery and once a verdict/ruling has been made, then they can appeal against that verdict ruling.

Decision 29 – Register of Ministers

SC decided that the register of ministers will also be made available online on the church website in order to assist us in future callings of ministers to new congregations.

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL SYNOD CORE MINISTRY FOR CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES (RSCMCM)

Decision 17 – Audit of Skills

SC instructs Congregational Ministries to do an audit of skills and formal qualifications within URCSA with the aim of utilizing these skills at both Presbytery and Synodical level in the core and support ministries in the church.

Decision 31: Forum for Ministers in Synodical Service

- i. SC approved the initiative that the Ministers in Synodical Service created a forum where they meet to discuss duties and responsibilities that overlap and to work together where there is overlapping with report to their respective Ministries
- ii. That the chairpersons of the respective core and support ministries have been invited to join the forum.

Decision 32 – URCSA and DRC

Where the possibility exists for congregations of the URCSA and the DRC to work together, the process regarding the URCSA congregations starting negotiations with DRC congregations, takes place under the supervision and with accompaniment of the respective Presbyteries and the RSCMCM.

Decision 33: Master's degree or PhD

SC approves of the Task Team consisting of Prof R Nel, Rev M Baartman, Rev D Bock and Rev S Pedro (MSS) who will attend to this decision on behalf of CM and will report at the next SC meeting.

Decision 34: Mentors

The contract with Rev. Andrew Esterhuizen be extended for six months with the aim to train mentors accompany ministers and their families.

1. RSCMCM will liaise with the CEO regarding the funds that is available for the ministry and use part of the money to fund the training of the mentors.
2. RSCMCM will approach the DRC, our partner in Communitas, to assist with funding of the training of mentors.

Decision 35: Well-being of ministers and their families

Rev. Moses Baartman is tasked to support:

- a. Congregations and Presbyteries until the mentors are trained. These mentors will then be trained to guide Presbyteries and congregations in the process to care for ministers and their families as well as support them
- b. The mentors to support ministers and their families.

Decision 36: Restructuring of RSCMCM

Restructuring of RSCMCM: Support to CYM and Youth Brigade:

SC approves of the newly established Operational Support Team consisting of Reverends Danny Bock (Chairperson), Quentin Minnaar, Peter September, Stephen Pedro, Srs. Lynnette Roelfse, Shaneeze Dilgee, Prof Reggie Nel and Administrative Assistant, Sr. Sharné Parker.

Decision 37: Skills Audit

SC instructs Congregational Ministries to do an audit of skills and formal qualifications within URCSA, with the aim of utilizing their skills at both Presbytery and Synodical level in the Core and Support Ministries in the church.

Decision 38: SCE funds

SC decides that the funds formerly allocated to the SCE now be allocated to RSCMCM

Decision 39: Student Ministry

The SC approves the actions taken by RSCMCM with relation to the welcoming and ministering to our URCSA Students and the plans to continue with Sunday services once a month at the various campuses.

Decision 40: The Taizè Pilgrimage of Trust

The SC approves the actions taken by RSCMCM with relation to the upcoming Taizé Meeting and encourages Church councils and Congregations to identify and support eligible young adults to attend the meeting.

Decision 41: Work of the MSS, Rev S Pedro

The SC approves the developments of the past year with relation to the Task Team Witness in and through Congregations and the constitution of the new Task Team for Congregational Ministry with special focus on the Witness of Congregations to streamline the work of the MSS, Rev Pedro, and wish him and the Task Team well with their future endeavours.

Decision 42: Services rendered by the MSS for CM and Witness

The SC noted and approves the visitation and support of Congregations and Presbyteries and call upon Congregations to tap into the services rendered by the MSS for Congregational Ministry and Witness.

Decision 43: Vacant Congregations

The SC approves the training of the 8 Ministers for Congregational Accompaniment, who will assist the MSS in his support of Congregations to develop their missional calling.

REPORT OF MINISTRY FOR DOCTRINE AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

Decision 45 – Appointment of Rev B. Handel

SC appoints Rev B Handel as a full member of the SMDCA.

REPORT OF WITNESS MINISTRY

Decision 1 - Persons with Disabilities

1. SC encourages congregations to dedicate one Sunday between 3 November and 3 December to celebrate National Disability Rights Awareness Month.
2. SC instructs Service and Witness to develop a Liturgy that congregations can use during National Disability Rights Awareness Month.

Decision 48: Booklet

The SC requests congregations to send new information to Louise Bruiners at kga2@kaapkerk.co.za or 087 957 7184 to be included in the booklet of congregations' details.

Decision 49: Centre for Public Witness

The SC expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Centre for Public Witness to create dialogue in communities where conflict is thriving.

Decision 50: Ecumenism and partnerships

The SC expresses its sympathy with the victims of the devastating cyclones in Mozambique and encourage congregations to contribute to the rebuilding of congregations of our sister church, the IRM.

Decision 51: Eco project

The SC urges congregations to participate in programmes to reduce pollution and climate change. It supports actions to ban all light plastic bags (checkers bags) and work together with ecumenical bodies to put pressure on the Department of Environmental Affairs to get legislation in place to accomplish this.

REPORT OF THE SYNODICAL COMMISSION FOR DIACONAL

Decision 53 – Joint Ministry

1. The SC approves the constituting of the ministry as reported in 3.2 and 3.3 (*see agenda book for 3.2 and 3.3*)
2. The SC endorse the change to the Regulation for the Joint Ministry for congregational diaconate to effect decision 177 of Synod 2018 to ensure balanced membership from each participating Synod in constituting the Joint Ministry

Decision 55 – Early Child development

The SC encourages the Ministry to continue developing the reported practical-theological ministerial strategy and research that will promote early childhood development as an expression of compassion with community development and missional transformation as outcome.

Decision 56 – Early Child Development

The SC approves the establishment of a one-stop early childhood development service between Diaconia and Badisa and confirms that it provides a best-practice model for shared vision with a view to congregational diaconate.

Decision 57 – Congregations and Badisa

The SC calls on the ministry to continue with facilitation processes that will contribute to symbiotic relationships and meaningful collaboration between congregations and Badisa programmes in communities.

Decision 58 – Month of compassion

The SC encourages congregations to celebrate Month of Compassion in August.

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL MINISTERIAL FORMATION TASK TEAM

Decision 61 – Contract of the Student Chaplain

The four-year contract of the Student Chaplain, Rev Dr NC Philander

The four-year term of the current URCSA Student Chaplain and Scribe of the Cape Synod RMFTT comes to an end on 31 March 2019. The post is based on 50% employment by the Cape Synod RMFTT and 50% employment by the local congregation. The RMFTT extended the contract of Rev Dr NC Philander to 31 March 2020 in order to give the RMFTT ample time to complete the application and appointment process. The advertising-process will be started on 26 June 2019.

Decision 62: MBTI Personality Profile

The Cape Synod RMFTT decides that the B. Div. students of 2018 as well as 2019 will have to do the MBTI personality profile. From 2020 it will be done with every B. Div. I student.

Decision 63: Payment to Dr C Pretorius

The Cape Synod RMFTT decides that the R 12 800.00 for this year's session with Dr. Chrisma Pretorius will be paid to her.

Decision 64: Budget of the Seminary

The Cape Synod RMFTT resolves to contribute the amount of R 12 000.00 to the 2019-2020 budget of the Seminary.

REPORT OF THE SUPPORT MINISTRIES PUBLICATION, ARCHIVES & INFO

Decision 2 – Thursdaysinblack

1. SC encourage delegates to sign the online pledge.
2. SC watch the Thursdaysinblack introductory video of Badisa on Thursday, 18 July 2019 and light the candle of hope.
3. SC instructs the social media team to create more awareness about the Thursdaysinblack campaign.

Decision 10 - The Acta of Synod 2018

The first print of the ACTA will only be available in English. Each congregation will receive one copy of the ACTA. The English translation of the ACTA will also be available on the Cape Synod website. Afrikaans and Xhosa translations of the ACTA will be available on request.

Decision 29 – Register of Ministers

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DECISION 66 – ORDERING OF ITEMS

SC decides that the following process should be followed regarding the ordering of items at LUS Bookshop:

- 1.An Invoice be sent to the congregation after an order has been made
- 2.The congregation settle the account
- 3.The order items will be sent.

Decision 67: Email addresses

As far as possible the service provider of congregations and the church's head-office should be used in email addresses.

PRESBYTERIES**Decision 6 - Leadership Training**

SC encourages Presbyteries and Church Councils to approach EFSA for workshop opportunities on local level.

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SYNODICAL OFFERINGS

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Decision 26 - Matters of the Curatorium / MFTT

- 1 The SC congratulates those who have already received calls but keep those who are not yet called in our prayers as Synodical Commission.
- 2 The SC reminds the congregations of their responsibility to call Ministers

Decision 38: SCE funds

SC decides that the funds formerly allocated to the SCE now be allocated to RSCMCM

Decision 42: Services rendered by the MSS for CM and Witness

(Point 1, Recommendation – Approved)

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Proposed by Rev JA Strauss and Seconded by Rev M Neewat-Joubert

Decision 67: Email addresses

As far as possible the service provider of congregations and the church's head-office should be used in email addresses.

Decision 70: Year of the Bible

1. SC urges congregations to adopt 2020 as the "Year of the Bible" and encourage members to read the Bible regularly.
2. Congregations are further encouraged to highlight this on their church calendars for 2020.

Decision 71: Bible Society

SC request that congregations should support the Bible Society with this initiative.

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RESPONSE TO CURRENT WAVE OF VIOLENT ATTACKS

DECISION 74: SC response to current wave of violent attacks

THE RESPONSE OF THE SYNODICAL COMMISSION OF URCSA CAPE SYNOD TO THE CURRENT WAVE OF VIOLENT ATTACKS COUNTRYWIDE

A The Synodical Commission of URCSA Cape Synod acknowledges the socio-historical factors and the complex nature of violence.

B Therefore, the Synodical Commission of URCSA Cape Synod strongly denounces the current wave of violent attacks country wide, especially the escalating violence on the Cape flats. We also strongly reject this violent phenomenon turning people (including our church members) into prisoners in their own homes and communities. The Synodical Commission of URCSA Cape Synod acknowledges and appreciates all efforts and interventions to address the situation.

C We call on all our congregations and members to pray for all victims of violence and stakeholders involved in seeking solutions. We call on our congregations to be actively involved in find solutions and become actively involved in preventing violent behavior and changing the culture of violence.

D We refer this critical issue to URCSA Cape Synod Congregational Ministry and Service and Witness Ministry to develop a framework addressing the culture of violence, with feedback to the Moderamen.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Decision 75: Homosexuality

Synod decides that Both Proposal 1 and Proposal 2 from Regional Synod 2018 remain the two positions with regard to homosexuality.

We encourage congregations and presbyteries to create safe spaces for dialogue and conversation which should include LGBTIQ+.

The Ministry for Doctrinal and Current Affairs be tasked to guide and help the Synod move forward on the biblical and theological appraisal of homosexuality as expressed in Proposal 1 and 2 from Regional Synod 2018 which can also include

- An appraisal of which theological and hermeneutical shifts helped the church in dealing with the issue of slavery and the position of women as resource for our dealing with the issue of homosexuality
- A guideline for congregations on how we understand the Bible today?
- A guideline for congregations on how we understand Scriptural authority today?