

16.22 REPORT 17: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY ABROAD – MEXICO DESK (Art 63)

- A. Rev HS Coetzee tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.

C. REPORT

Deputies responsible for the desk: Dr DG Breed.

1. Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México, A. R. (INPM)

Ecumenical Ties

For notice

1.1 *Mandate*

The Deputies Ecumenicity (abroad) are instructed to regularly make contact with Reformed church communities abroad on matters of urgent and common interest, in accordance with CO, art 49 (Acta 1997:176, 3.1.1).

Decision: Noted.

1.2 *Execution of the mandate*

1.2.1 After dr DG Breed met the INPM delegates in 2012 in São Paulo at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), the GKSA received an invitation to send delegates to the general assembly of the INPM in Monterrey, Mexico from 16-20 July 2012.

1.2.2 Drs DG Breed and PJ Buys were delegated to attend the assembly in Monterrey. Dr Buys also attended the meeting as delegate of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).

1.2.3 Relevant information about the INPM

1.2.3.1 The INPM is the largest Calvinistic denomination in Mexico, with approximately 6000 congregations and approximately 1 200 000 members.

1.2.3.2 They have 700 ministers, 50 presbyteries, 8 regional synods, 1 General Assembly and 7 Theological seminaries for theological training.

1.2.3.3 They operate in the following official languages: Spanish, Maya, Chol, Tzetal, Tojolabal, Mixe, Mixteco and other Indian languages. The Synod was held in Spanish only, with English translation for foreign delegates.

1.2.3.4 They follow the Apostolic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt and the Westminster Confession of 1646/47. The INPM recognises another 5 internationally recognised Reformed Confessions like the Belgic Confession, the Gallican Confession, the Scottish Confession and the Second Helvetic Confession.

1.2.3.5 The INPM recently celebrated their 140-year anniversary in splendid fashion.

1.2.3.6 The INPM have various ties with churches in common with the GKSA, among which: the Christian Reformed Churches in North America (CRCNA), Presbyterian Churches in America (PCA) and the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (CGK). The INPM is also a member of the WRF.

1.2.3.7 It was clear to the GKSA's Deputies, from in-depth discussions and events during the General Assembly that the INPM takes care to stay true to Scripture and the Confessions.

1.2.4 During the delegates' visit to Mexico, the INPM showed great interest in the training that GKSA ministers receive as well as the training offered by other institutions of the NWU. Dr Breed was asked to investigate the possibility of INPM students receiving theological and other training via the NWU's Open Learning Programme.

This request was followed up, in December 2012, when a NWU delegation consisting of the Rector of the Potchefstroom campus as well as deans and other staff members visited Mexico.

The discussions with the INPM's theological school in Monterrey went quite well. It seemed that the NWU and the relevant theological school would be able to establish a university in Monterrey, starting off with a faculty for theology and for economic sciences. A visit was made to the INPM's training institution, Alfa y Omega, in Villahermosa, Mexico. It was clear that the NWU, together with Alfa y Omega, could start presenting undergraduate and post-graduate courses there.

The NWU and Alfa y Omega entered into an agreement of intent. Meanwhile, the INPM delegates visited the NWU and progress has been made in arranging for the open-learning programme to start in Mexico.

Decision: Points 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 noted.

For decision making

1.3 *Recommendations*

1.3.1 Note should be taken, with thanks, of the growth in the ecumenical relationship between the GKSA and the INPM as well as of the possible cooperation with theological and other training.

1.3.2 Ecumenical ties are to be established with the INPM.

Decision: Points 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 approved.

16.23 DEPUTIES ECUMENICAL ABROAD – GREETINGS (Artt 70, 78, 195, 232)

A. GREETINGS : CHURCHES ABROAD

Representatives of respective churches receive the opportunity to convey greetings:

1. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland: W Middelkoop.
2. Christian Reformed Churches in North America: P Borgdorff.
3. Christian Reformed Churches of Australia: L Douma.
4. Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in America: T Curto.
5. Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea: KH Kwon.
6. Reformed Church of East Africa: MKK Maina.
7. Reformed Churches of New Zealand: J Rogers.
8. Sudanese Reformed Churches: P Jok Ding.
9. United Reformed Church of Congo: M Kabongo.
10. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Africa: R Mabonga.
11. World Reformed Fellowship: PJ Buys.
12. Presbyterian Church of America: L Duncan.
13. Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken: AH Reitsema.

The chairperson, dr DG Breed, directs a word of thanks to the respective representatives with the request to convey greetings to the meetings of their respective churches. The meeting sings for the respective churches from Lifela Tsa Sione 12 and Ps 134:4.

B. WORD OF GRATITUDE TO REPRESENTATIVES OF CHURCHES ABROAD

Rev HPM van Rhyn addresses a word of thanks to the representatives of churches abroad with the request to convey greetings to their respective churches. He leads the meeting in prayer after which the meeting asks for the Lord's blessing upon the in song.

C. WORD OF THANKS

Dr J Rogers, Reformed Churches of New Zealand, address a few words of thanks and blessing to the meeting. The chairperson, dr DG Breed, thanks him and wishes him a blessed journey.