

28. WERKSWYSE VAN SINODES 28. MODE OF OPERATION OF THE SYNOD

28.1 BESKRYWINGSPUNT: STREEKSINODE VRYSTAAT/KWAZULU NATAL RAKENDE AFVAARDIGING NA DIE ALGEMENE SINODE (Art 46)

28.1 POINT OF DESCRIPTION: REGIONAL SYNOD FREE STATE/KWAZULU NATAL REGARDING DELEGATION TO THE GENERAL SYNOD (Art 46)

- A. Ds AJ Burger stel die Beskrywingspunt.
Rev. AJ Burger tables the Point of Description.
- B. Die Beskrywingspunt word staande die Sinode afgehandel.
The Point of Description is concluded while the Synod is in session.
- C. **Besluit: Daar word nie aan die Beskrywingspunt gevolg gegee nie.**
Motivering: Die Beskrywingspunt is voorskriftelik en neig na reglementering.
Decision: The Point of Description is not accepted.
Motivation: The Point of Description is prescriptive and tends towards regulating.

D. BESKRYWINGSPUNT / POINT OF DESCRIPTION

<p>1. Voorstel Dat die Algemene Sinode die grootte van die vergadering weselik sal verklein deur die aantal afgevaardigdes per Streeksinode te verminder</p> <p>1.1 tot 'n maksimum van 20</p> <p>1.2 bestaande uit 'n gelyke getal van 10 predikante en 10 ouderlinge</p> <p>1.3 met die strewe van ten minste 2 predikante en 2 ouderlinge vanuit elke Klassis.</p> <p>1.4 Verder, dat die kultuur en/of taal verskeidenheid verreken te word om die grootste moontlike verband te handhaaf met die verskeidenheid van gemeentes wat in die Algemene Sinode vergadering verteenwoordig word.</p> <p>2. Inleiding Die aantal en metode van afvaardiging is 'n ooreenkoms tussen kerke Die huidige praktyk van afvaardiging na die Algemene Sinode is geskoei op die besluit van die 2009 Algemene Sinode (Acta 2009:358): 4.4 Afvaardiging: Die Algemene Sinode 2009 kondoneer en bevestig die huidige wyse van afvaardiging na die Algemene Sinode, nl. Dat die huidige sewe Streeksinodes elk 20 predikante en 20 ouderlinge afvaardig. Die getalle word vir die volgende Algemene Sinode gehandhaaf. Dit is wenslik dat die afgevaardigdes so goed moontlik al die kerke</p>	<p>1. Proposal That the General Synod significantly reduces the size of the meeting by setting the number of delegates from each Regional Synod</p> <p>1.1 to a maximum of 20</p> <p>1.2 being an equal number of 10 ministers and 10 elders</p> <p>1.3 striving to include at least 2 ministers and 2 elders from each Classis.</p> <p>1.4 Furthermore, that the cultural and/or language diversity be taken into account to maintain the greatest possible connection of the churches that would be meeting in the General Synod.</p> <p>2. Introduction The number and method of delegation is an agreement between churches The current practice of delegation is based on the decision taken by the 2009 General Synod (Acta 2009:358) freely translated: 4.4 Delegation: The General Synod 2009 condones and confirms the existing practise of delegation to the General Synod, namely, that the current seven Regional Synods each delegate 20 Minister and 20 Elders. These numbers will be maintained for the next General Synod. It is desirable that, as far as possible, delegates should represent all the churches meeting in the Synod.</p>
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wat in die Sinode vergader, sal verteenwoordig.

Tydens oorweging van 'n beswaar teen getrapte afvaardiging in 2009, rapporteer die Kommissie van pre-advies o.a. dat, "2.3.6 *Kerkregtelikes is in eenstemmig dat die Kerkordelike reëlings met betrekking tot die hoeveelheid afgevaardigdes vanuit die Klassis en ander meerdere vergaderings nie in hulle praktiese inkleding op pertinente Skrifbeginsels berus nie, maar eerder op afspraak tussen die kerke* (Acta 2009:839, 2.3.6).

'n Beswaar teen getrapte afvaardiging in 2009 het nie geslaag nie en die Sinode het die volgende bygevoeg by die besluit om getrapte afvaardiging te handhaaf: "3.2 *Om veranderde reëlings oor afvaardiging tot vermindering of tot vermeerdering sodat selfs uit elke kerk iemand teenwoordig kan wees, op die Sinodetafel te bring, moet daar veral op praktiese gronde beredeneer word. Praktiese probleme het dikwels gelei tot verminderde afgevaardigdes sonder dat die beginsel van Christus se regering deur ouderlinge daardeur aangetas is*" (Acta 2009:840, 3.2). Hierdie Beskrywingspunt se voorstel berus derhalwe op "praktiese gronde" ten einde die "afpraak tussen kerke" rakende afvaardiging na die Algemene Sinode te wysig.

3. Motivering van voorstel

Soos bepaal in die besluit van die 2009 Algemene Sinode (Acta 2009:840, 3.2 hierbo aangehaal in die inleiding) word die motivering op praktiese oorwegings gebaseer.

- 3.1 *Die voorgestelde verminderde afvaardiging sal die koste van die Algemene Sinode vergadering weselik verminder*
Die voorgestelde vermindering van 280 na 140 afgevaardigdes na die Algemene Sinode sal 'n wesentlike vermindering van koste van die Algemene Sinode tot gevolg hê.

Die akkommodasie en reiskostes van afgevaardigdes is van die grootste kostes soos gerapporteer in die 2006 beoordeling om die Algemene Sinode se vergadering skedule te verander (Acta 2006:824).

Al meer kerke is onder finansiële druk soos die inligting wat van die Admin Buro verkry is ten tyde van die voorstel formulering en in die onderstaande tabel bevestig. Elke verlaging van oorhoofse

While considering an objection against the system of stepped delegation in 2009, the commission of pre-advice reported that, "2.3.6 *There is agreement among scholars of Church governance that practical Church Order arrangements regarding the number of representatives from the Classis and other major assemblies is not founded on pertinent Scripture principles, but rather on agreement between churches*" (Acta 2009:839, 2.3.6).

The Synod rejected an objection against stepped delegation in 2009 and added the following when upholding the decision of stepped delegation (translated freely): "3.2 *To table a proposal for any changes in the arrangements regarding delegation, to reduce or to increase so that each church could be represented, the proposal should especially address its practical grounds. Practical problems have often lead to the reduction of delegates without compromising the principle the governance of Christ through elders*" (Acta 2009:840, 3.2). This Point of Description is therefore based on "practical grounds" in order to change the "agreement between churches" regarding delegation to the General Synod.

3. Motivation of proposal

As it was determined by the 2009 General Synod (Acta 2009:840, 3.2 quoted above) the motivation of this proposal is based on practical considerations.

- 3.1 *The proposed reduction of the delegation will reduce the cost of the General Synod meeting significantly*

The proposed reduction of delegates to the General Synod from 280 to 140 would have a significant reduction in the cost of the General Synod.

Accommodation and travelling expenses of the delegates is of the biggest cost items as reported in the 2006 proposal to change the meeting schedule (Acta 2006:824).

More and more churches experience financial difficulties as is evident from the information obtained from the Admin Bureau at the time this proposal was formulated and indicated in the table below.

kostes, soos bv om Sinodes te hou, sal meewerk tot verligting.	Every reduction in overhead cost, like for e.g. synod meetings, shall contribute towards a reduction of this burden.
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Algemene Sinode Ramings soos op 31/12/2019 General Synod "Ramings" as on 31/12/2019	Algemene Sinode Sustentatie vir 2020 General Synod Sustentation for 2020
Aantal kerke <i>Number of churches</i> 409	Aantal aansoeke <i>Number of applications</i> 37
Kerke agterstallig <i>Churches in arrears</i> 298 73%	Totale bedrag aangevra <i>Total amount requested</i> R6.8 million
Totale bedrag agterstallig <i>Total amount in arrears</i> R28,4 million	Totale bedrag goedgekeur <i>Total amount approved</i> R1.5 million

Inligting bekom van die Admin Buro / *Information obtained from the Admin Bureau*

<p>Alhoewel die bedrag van koste besparing wat hierdie voorstel kon bring sou verskil indien die Sinode in die toekoms op 'n ander formaat gehou word, is die tendens van besparing onafhanklik van die Sinode formaat. Dit geld dus ook indien daar 'n vooraf telematiese proses sou wees gevolg deur 'n korter fisiese byeenkoms soos in die 2018 Algemene Sinode besluit in die vooruitsig gestel is (Acta 2018:103-106).</p> <p>3.2 <i>Die voorgestelde verminderde afvaardiging sal die nakoming van die beginsel van gelyke afvaardiging van Predikante en Ouderlinge bevorder</i> KO, art 50 stel die beginsel dat " 'n gelyke aantal bedienaars van die Woord en ouderlinge" afgevaardig moet word. Sedert die afvaardiging van 20 predikante en 20 ouderlinge per Streeksinode in 2009, blyk dit dat hierdie beginsel van gelyke afvaardiging by elke Sinode sedert 2009 in gedrang was, soos in die tabel hieronder aangedui. Indien afvaardiging volgens die voorstel van hierdie Beskrywingspunt sou wees, sou die vereiste van gelyke afvaardiging by al die Sinodes sedert 2009 gehandhaaf kon word, aangesien elke Streeksinode in elke geval ten minste 10 ouderlinge afvaardig het. (Daar is net een enkele uitsondering van die Suidelike Streeksinode wat slegs 9 ouderlinge afgevaardig het na die 2018 Algemene Sinode.) Hierdie voorstel sal Streeksinodes dus beter in staat stel om die beginsel van KO, art 50 te handhaaf.</p>	<p>Although the amount of expense saving resulting from this proposal would be different if the Synod in future would meet in a different format, the trend of the saving is independent of the meeting format – even if a portion of the Synod meeting would be telematic followed by a shorter physical meeting as contemplated by the 2018 General Synod (Acta 2018:103-106).</p> <p>3.2 <i>The proposed reduction in delegation would promote the adherence to the principle of an equal delegation of ministers and Elders</i> CO, art 50 states the principle that an equal number of Ministers of the Ord and Elders should be delegated. Since the current delegation of 20 ministers and 20 elders for each Regional Synod in 2009, it appears that this principle has been in jeopardy in each Synod since 2009, as indicated in the table below. If delegation would have been according to this proposal, then the requirement of an equal delegation would have been met by all Synod meetings since 2009, since each Regional Synod has delegated at least 10 elders. (There is a single exception when Southern Regional Synod delegated only 9 elders to the 2018 General Synod.)</p> <p>This proposal would therefore enhance the ability of Regional Synods to adhere to the principle of CO, art 50.</p>
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Tabel: Minder ouderlinge as predikante afgevaardig

Gebaseer op konstituering van die Algemene Sinodes soos gerapporteer in die onderskeie Acta

Table: Less elders delegated than ministers

Based on the constituting of the General Synods as reported in the respective Acta

Jaar Year	% Ouderling minder as predikante % Elders less than ministers
2009 Januarie / January	- 15 %
2009 Junie / June	- 28 %
2012	- 7 %
2015	- 22 %
2016 Buitengewone / Extraordinary	- 11 %
2018	- 26 %

3.3 Die voorgestelde verminderde afvaardiging sal nie die verband met kerke of die handhawing van kultuur diversiteit in gedrang bring nie, maar bevorder

Sedert die eerste oorweging van “getrapte afvaardiging” soos in 1958 besluit en in 1976 en 2009 gehandhaaf, was die noodsaaklikheid voorop gestel om ‘n “verband” te handhaaf met die kerke wat in die Sinode verteenwoordig word (Acta 1952:272 / 1955:119 / 1958:39 en 1976:463). Met “verband” word verwys na die belewenis en persepsie van nabyheid/betrokkenheid/ eenheid/verteenwoordiging/deelname/ eienaarskap van kerke in die meerdere vergadering.

Die Algemene Sinode van 2009 het die beginsel van “verband” gehandhaaf (Acta 2009:358) en Deputate aangewys (Acta 2009:359) om onder andere aandag te gee aan: “4.5.2.1.3 Hoe groter deelname en betrokkenheid van al die kerke bereik kan word binne die konteks van diversiteit.”

Die huidige groter aantal afgevaardigdes skep nie noodwendig ‘n goeie verband of handhawing van kultuur diversiteit van al die kerke nie. Dit blyk byvoorbeeld uit die “onbetrokkenheid” en verlies aan diversiteit mbt die afvaardiging van isiZulu-sprekende kerke vanuit beide KZN Streek Klassisse. In 2009 was slegs 1 isiZulu-sprekende predikant as *sekundus* afgevaardig, 1 was afgevaardig in 2012 as *primus*, en geen in 2015 en 2016 nie.

3.3 The proposed reduction in delegation would not jeopardise maintaining contact with the churches and accounting for culture and language diversity, but would enhance it

Since the first consideration of a “stepped delegation” as decided in 1958 and again maintained in 1976 and 2009, it was considered imperative to maintain contact with the churches represented in the Synod (Acta 1952:272 / 1955:119 / 1958:39 and 1976:463). ‘Contact’ is referring to the experience and perception of proximity/ unity/representation/participation/ ownership of the churches represented in the major meeting.

The General Synod of 2009 maintained the principle of ‘contact’ (Acta2009:358) and appointed Deputies (Acta 2009:359) to investigate: “4.5.2.1.3 To see how greater participation and involvement of all churches can be attained within the context of diversity.”

The current larger number of delegations does not necessarily create a good connection or maintenance of culture diversity of all churches. This is evident by example of the poor contact and lack of diversity regarding delegation of isiZulu speaking churches from both KZN Regional Classes. In 2009 only 1 isiZulu speaking minister was delegated as *secundus*, 1 was delegated in 2012 as *primus*, and none in 2015 and 2016. At the 2018 General

<p>By die 2018 Algemene Sinode was daar 3 isiZulu sprekende predikante. Indien hierdie voorstel van verminderde afvaardiging aanvaar word soos voorgestel, “<i>met die strewe van ten minste 2 predikante en 2 ouderlinge vanuit elke Klassis</i>”, fasiliteer dit dat daar van elke streek en, met enkele uitsondering waar daar drie kulture in een Klassis is, ook van elke kultuur en bedieningskonteks afvaardiging kan wees met die gevolglike “betrokkenheid” of “verband” van die volle spektrum van kerke wat in die Algemene Sinode verteenwoordig word.</p>	<p>Synod there were however 3 isiZulu speaking ministers. If this proposal of reduced delegation is accepted, as proposed “<i>striving to include at least 2 ministers and 2 elders from each Classis</i>”, it would enable delegation from every region, and with limited exception where there might be three cultures in one Classis, also from every culture and ministry context with subsequent connection of all churches represented in the General Synod.</p>
<p>3.4 <i>Die voorgestelde verminderde afvaardiging sal nie die beginsel van meerdere besinning oor Christus se regering in gedrang bring nie</i></p> <p>Die beginsel van afvaardiging na “meerdere” vergaderings is nie bloot dat meer persone met gawes afgevaardig word nie, maar dat meer kerke betrokke is en verteenwoordig word en dat die gawes van meer kerke beskikbaar word vir afvaardiging. Ongeag die aantal afgevaardigdes het hulle dieselfde roeping om as meer kerke saam die enkele gesag van Christus te bepaal en te handhaaf (Visser:330). Dit was reeds ook die Algemene Sinode se oordeel in die 2009 besluit oor afvaardiging, “<i>Praktiese probleme het dikwels gelei tot verminderde afgevaardigdes sonder dat die beginsel van Christus se regering deur ouderlinge daardeur aangetas is</i>” (Acta 2009:840, 3.2). Hierdie is dieselfde beginsel wat sedert 1958 in praktyk is, dat minder afvaardiging nie inbreuk maak op die afvaardiging van die beste gawes uit meerdere kerke nie.</p>	<p>3.4 <i>The proposed reduction of delegation would not jeopardise the principle of major (more) consideration of Christ’s governance</i></p> <p>The principle of delegation to a major meeting is not merely the delegation of more persons with gifts, but that more churches are involved and that more gifts from more churches are available for delegation. Irrespective of the number of delegates, they have the same calling as more churches together considering and upholding the single authority of Christ (Visser:330). That was already the conclusion in the General Synod in the 2009 decision regarding delegation, “<i>Practical problems has often lead to the reduction of delegates without compromising the principle the governance of Christ through elders</i>” (Acta 2009:840, 3.2). This is the same principle which has been practices since 1958, that reduction in delegation does not jeopardise delegation of the best gifts from more churches.</p>
<p>3.5 <i>Die voorgestelde verminderde afvaardiging sal meer buigsaamheid verleen in vergadering skedule</i></p> <p>Bywoning van ‘n Algemene Sinode vergadering in Januarie is ‘n wesentliche struikelblok vir baie goed begaafde ouderlinge weens werksvereistes in die begin van die jaar. Dit plaas ‘n beperking op Streeksinodes in die besinning van ouderling afvaardiging omdat veral</p>	<p>3.5 <i>The proposed reduction in delegation would enable more flexibility in meeting schedule</i></p> <p>Attending a General Synod meeting in January is a significant obstacle for many well-gifted elders in full-time employment due to their job requirements in the beginning of the ear. This is a limitation for Regional Synods when considering the elders available for delegation to the General</p>

<p>jonger ouderlinge nie in Januarie kan verlof neem nie.</p> <p>Tydens oorweging van verskuifde vergadertyd deur die 2009 Algemene Sinode (Acta 2009:35) is kennis geneem dat die onbeskikbaarheid van akkommodasie in Potchefstroom in enige ander tyd van die jaar die grootste uitdaging is wat verskuiwing van die vergadering na 'n ander tyd verhinder. Indien die bywoning van die Algemene Sinode effektief halveer word soos voorgestel, sal dit die beperking van akkommodasie wesenlik beïnvloed en selfs ander moontlikhede as die NWU kon ontsluit. Dit sou selfs die moontlikheid van ander vergader lokale kon ontsluit.</p>	<p>Synod, since especially younger elders cannot take leave in January.</p> <p>When the possibility to move the meeting was considered in 2009, the General Synod noted (Acta 2009:35) that the biggest challenge preventing changes to the meeting date was the unavailability of enough accommodation in Potchefstroom during any other time of the year.</p> <p>If the attendance to the General Synod would be reduced effectively by half, as is proposed, it would bring this hurdle of accommodation lower and it could open other possibilities of accommodation. It might even enable consideration of alternative meeting venues.</p>
<p>3.6 <i>Motivering van die voorgestelde getal afgevaardigdes</i></p> <p>Die Algemene Sinode behoort, soos enige ander vergadering, nie groter te wees as wat regtig nodig is om in die doel/roeping van die vergadering te slaag nie. Dit het ook beslag gevind in die Kerkorde van Dordt 1619 wat bepaal dat afvaardiging na 'n meerdere vergadering sal bestaan uit slegs 2 predikant en 2 ouderling van elke mindere vergadering wat in die meerdere vergadering verteenwoordig is¹.</p> <p>Die veel groter diversiteit van veral kultuur en taal tussen kerke en kerkvergaderings in die GKSA noodsaak egter groter verteenwoordigheid om kontak van/met kerke in praktyk geloofwaardig te behou. Tydens opstel van hierdie voorstel, bestaan Klassis KwaZulu-Natal Suid byvoorbeeld uit 5 Afrikaans- en 6 isiZulu-sprekende kerke. Om “<i>groter deelname en betrokkenheid van die kerke (te) bereik ... binne die konteks van diversiteit</i>” (Acta 2009:359) en steeds gelyke afvaardiging van predikante en ouderlinge te handhaaf, is die minimum verteenwoordigende afvaardiging derhalwe 2 predikante en 2 ouderlinge vanuit elke Klassis. In die geval van Klassis KwaZulu-Natal Suid sou dit byvoorbeeld prakties neerkom op 1 predikant en ouderling vanuit</p>	<p>3.6 <i>Motivation for the proposed number of delegates</i></p> <p>The General Synod, like any other meeting, should not be bigger than what is necessary to fulfil its role. It is also evident in the Church Order of Dordt 1619 which defined delegation to a major meeting as only four representatives (2 ministers and 2 elders)¹ from each represented minor (mindere) meeting.</p> <p>The much bigger diversity of culture and language amongst churches and church meetings in the GKSA, necessitates a bigger delegation. Taking Classis KwaZulu-Natal South as an example – it is constituted by 6 Afrikaans speaking churches 6 isiZulu speaking churches. To ensure “<i>greater participation and involvement of all churches ... within the context of diversity</i>” (Acta 2009:359) and still maintain an equal delegation of ministers and elders, the minimum delegation should be 2 ministers and 2 elders from such a Classis – 1 minister and 1 elder from the Afrikaans speaking churches and 1 minister and 1 elder from the isiZulu speaking churches.</p>

¹ <http://www.kerkrecht.nl/node/489>

Afrikaanse geledere en 1 predikant en ouderling vanuit isiZulu geledere.

Die Algemene Sinode is 'n vergadering van Streeksinodes (KO, art 50) en aangesien die een nie oor die ander mag heerskappy voer nie (KO, art 84) behoort die afvaardiging van al die Streeksinodes dieselfde getal te wees. Dit is ook presies wat die 1976 Nasionale Sinode Potchefstroom gehandhaaf het (Acta 1976:463). Aangesien al die Streeksinodes nie dieselfde aantal Klassisse het nie, kan afvaardiging deur Streeksinodes nie gebaseer word op die aantal Klassisse nie. (Streeksinode Vrystaat/KwaZulu-Natal het byvoorbeeld 5 Klassisse terwyl Streeksinode Randvaal slegs 3 Klassisse het.) Die meeste Klassisse in 'n Streeksinode is wel 5 (Acta 2009:345/6).

Samevattend: Om 'n goeie verband met gemeentes te vestig wat prakties haalbaar is in die GKSA se divers saamgestelde Klassisse en Streeksinodes, en om gelyke afvaardiging van Streeksinodes te bied, is die voorstel dat elke Streeksinode 'n totaal van 20 verteenwoordigers (5x4), 10 predikante en 10 ouderlinge, sal afvaardig na die Algemene Sinode.

Die volgende voorbeelde word gegee as illustrasie van die basis vir hierdie voorstel:

Streeksinode Vrystaat/KwaZulu-Natal sou dan byvoorbeeld 4 verteenwoordigers vanuit elk van die 5 Klassisse afvaardig vir 'n totale afvaardiging van 20.

Streeksinode Randvaal sou soortgelyks 4 uit elke Klassis afvaardig maar ook 'n addisionele 6 afgevaardigdes om ook 20 verteenwoordigers af te vaardig.

4. Aanbeveling

Dit word aanbeveel dat die Algemene Sinode die voorstel sal oorweeg en as besluit aanvaar.

Besluit: Daar word nie aan die Beskrywingspunt gevolg gegee nie.

Motivering: Die Beskrywingspunt is voorskriftelik en neig na reglementering.

The General Synod is a meeting of Regional Synods (CO, art 50) and since on may not rule over the other (CO, art 84) the delegation from all Regional Synods should be same number of delegates. That was what the 1976 National Synod (Potchefstroom) maintained (Acta 1976:463). Since not all Regional Synods does not have the same number of Classes, the number of delegates cannot be based on the number of Classes. (For example, Regional Synod Free State/KwaZulu-Natal has 5 Classes and Regional Synod Randvaal only 3.) The most Classes in a Regional Synod is 5 (Acta 2009:345/6).

Combined: To establish a good connection with churches that is practicable in the diversely constituted Classes and Regional Synods, and to maintain equal representation from all Regional Synods, it is proposed that each Regional Synod delegate a total of 20 delegates (5x4), 10 ministers and 10 elder, to the General Synod.

The following examples serves to illustrates the basis for this proposal:

Regional Synod Free State/KwaZulu-Natal would delegate 4 representatives from each of the 5 Classis, totalling 20.

Regional Synod Randvaal would also delegate 4 representatives from each Classis, but an additional 6 delegates in order to have a total delegation of 20.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that General Synod would consider and accept this proposal as decision.

Decision: The Point of Description is not accepted.

Motivation: The Point of Description is prescriptive and tends towards regulating.