



## Christian Reformed Church in South Africa *Synodical Ecumenical Secretary*

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### **REPORT ON THE YEAR SINCE SYNOD 2015**

The Synod of the CRC in SA met during August 2015 at a venue near Cape Town and focused much attention on three specific ministry matters:

1. The launch of a new National Youth Ministry initiative to ensure that the new generation is effectively impacted through local churches, regional networks and national youth ministry projects. A task team was appointed to implement the strategy and launch a Youth Gap Year Program from January 2017.
2. The expansion and renewed recruitment of students for the undergraduate program of theological training in order to redress the current shortage of pastors and church planters. For this strategic process the CRTS is interested in working with its fellowship partners in the WRF to find available teachers to come and assist the CRTS in South Africa during the next three years.
3. Maintaining and expanding the missional nature of all local CR churches. Synod encouraged all churches to follow the example of numerous local churches who are running an annual world mission conference, implementing the faith promise offering, organizing cross-cultural outreaches, and consistently praying for the ripening of mission fields where breakthroughs are needed. It is acknowledged with praise to God that over the period since the previous Synod in 2012 CRC has invested more than R6 million in mission sending.

Apart from the above the CRC has focused much attention on making the Confessional heritage of the CRC more understandable and applicable to ordinary members. A task team is working at the wider inclusion of other reformed ecumenical confessions that are not currently stated as the Confessional basis for the CRC. In this regard the WRF Statement of Faith has served a meaningful purpose in ensuring that what we believe remains relevant to our time and context. For that we are thankful.

A voice was also raised against the religiously driven Halaal business and economic strategy that is employed very effectively by the minority Muslim community in South Africa. This business strategy has been spread into almost the whole of the business sector in South Africa, causing the majority Christian population to effectively support the Islamic religious movement through the Halaal system. The CRC Synod joined other Christian organizations in South Africa to protest this system which we believe is inappropriate and unfair marketing, bordering on collusion which is religiously protected. A formal complaint was lodged with the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities and a response is still being awaited.

After having hosted four *Embers to a Flame* Conferences with Dr Harry Reeder of Briarwood PCA in South Africa for the wider Body of Christ, the CRC has now requested that the coaching process of *Fanning the Flame* be effectively launched in South Africa for the benefit of all denominations that are convinced that they have local churches who are in need of such a coaching process. Briarwood PCA are willing to make their materials and expertise available for this initiative.

Finally, the CRC has cooperated with various ecumenical structures in South Africa to ensure that the Church remains a voice of truth in the changing nature of the socio-political and socio-economical spheres in the nation. Through The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA), the Consultation of Christian Churches, the South African Leadership Initiative, and SEFSA (Socio-Economic Future of SA) the CRC have added its advocacy function and served to address political misdemeanors, corruption and malmanagement by authorities. There is a current appeal to the governing party that the current president, who has become an embarrassment and liability to the nation – and especially the poor and needy – resign, and if he will not do that, that the party terminate his leadership role. These very open and specific advocacy actions have already resulted in the governing party losing out badly during the latest local elections.

The CRC is grateful to God for its participation in an evangelical and reformed body like the WRF and pray that the blessings of the Lord will rest upon its continued work.

**Rev. Richard M Verreyne**  
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