

# Mission Deputies of the Free Reformed Churches in SA

Date 8 May 2024  
V1.0

## Report to Synod 2024, Mamelodi



Dear Brothers

Attached please find the 2024 report of the Mission Deputies of South Africa (MDSA), appointed by Synod Belhar 2021.

Not all relevant information is included in this report, like minutes of MDSA meetings and reports of workshops and conferences. This information is available on request from the secretary.

In this report we reflect on the progress made over the past three years and table important questions and points which affects this deputyship and FRCSA. Most important to highlight are:

- The FRCSA's relationship with the Dutch Reformed churches has come to an end and questions arise on whether we should continue to approach them for funding.
- Shortages in funds from 2025 due to ZAM's announcement that it would gradually cut contributions to 50% of the budget, reaching the 50% in 2026.

Not addressing the above points will have a significant impact on the work of the mission.

We trust this report is an accurate representation of the status of the MDSA deputyship.

We pray that you as synod delegates receive strength for your work and may God bless you with wisdom for the decisions you will have to make.

With sisterly and brotherly greetings, from MDSA:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Br. Iwan Agema  
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sr. Tanya Bijker  
Secretary

## 1 Mandate 2021 and the execution thereof

Synod Belhar 2021 gave the following mandate to the MDSA. Short responses are added to the individual points:

1. To act in accordance with the Agreement of Cooperation between MDSA and any sponsor. **There was regular contact with ZAM/Verre Naasten in the Netherlands, with some in-person meetings, attendance of the yearly mission indaba (for the first time again in 2022) and email correspondence.**
2. To act in accordance with the Agreement of Cooperation regarding mission work between the FRCSA churches. **The contact between the mission committees and MDSA is more regular, besides attending the yearly mission indabas there's regular in-person contact, email correspondence and submission of half yearly reports.**
3. To request FRC Wesbank to sign the Agreement of Cooperation regarding the mission between the FRCSA churches. **Done.**
4. To act in accordance with the FRCSA Policy for Supported Mission Projects, approved at Synod 2017. **This was done as per the cooperation agreement. The regular information meetings that were halted during Covid were started again, as was the visit of one of our missionaries to the Netherlands for PR. Reports and related information were sent to all cooperating churches in South Africa.**
5. To assess the different congregations via the questor according to the adopted differentiated contribution model and the increased quota as per their budget:

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
R 476 406	R 504 990	R 535 289	R 567 407	R 601 451

6. To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held more or less halfway between Synod 2021 and the next Synod. **The report was submitted and discussed during the indaba in Johannesburg in 2023.**
7. To report to the next Synod and formulate recommendations according to Art 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules. Included in this report.

## 2 Mandate / Recommendations

1. To act in accordance with any Agreement of Co-operation between MDSA and any sponsor.
2. To act in accordance with the “Agreement of Cooperation regarding the mission between the FRCSA churches”.
3. To act in accordance with the “FRCSA policy for supported mission projects”, approved at synod 2017.
4. The Synod needs to understand and act accordingly on the budgeted shortages due to the ZAM reduction in funding which is clear from 2025 onwards and bring this to the attention of the missionary churches who’s responsibility remains to raise the necessary funds for missionary work. MDSA will assist and support in this matter as we are already doing.
5. To assess the different congregations via the questor according to the adopted differentiated contribution model and the increased quota as per above budget and repeated here.

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
R 476 406	R 504 990	R 535 289	R 567 407	R 601 451

6. Our (the FRCSA’s) relationship with the Dutch Reformed churches has come to an end and questions arise on whether we should still approach them for funding. It is recommended to continue working with ZAM/Verre Naasten at this stage and review our situation again on the next Synod in 2027.
7. To report to the next synod according to the Rules of Synod as adopted by Synod 2024.
8. To discharge current and appoint new deputies as indicated in this report.

## 3 Deputy Membership

Currently the deputies are:

- Br. Iwan Agema (convener), Pretoria
- Br. Sietze Snijder (treasurer), Pretoria
- Br. Lood IJlst (PR), Pretoria
- Sr. Tanya Bijker (secretary), Pretoria
- Br. Marne De Vries, Cape Town.
- Br. Jaco Van Rensburg, Pretoria (Br J van Rensburg was co-opted during the past year).

The co-operation within deputies was excellent. The remote deputy (M. De Vries) provided much better contact with the mission work in Cape Town.

Resignations due to each serving 13 years individually:

- Sr. Tanya Bijker
- Br. Lood IJlst

We’re asking the synod to appoint these deputies:

- Br. Iwan Agema (convener), Pretoria >> reappoint
- Br. Sietze Snijder (treasurer), Pretoria >> reappoint
- Sr. Linda Boessenkool (secretary), Pretoria (Maranata) >> replacing sr T. Bijker
- Br. Marné De Vries, Cape Town >> reappoint
- Br. Jaco Van Rensburg, Pretoria >> replacing br. L. IJlst

## 4 Summary of Report

In this report we reflect on our relationship with our main sponsor ZAM. We briefly highlight the impact of the reduction in cost and stress the importance of raising additional funds as well as start new projects to unlock funds with the current missionaries. We again asked the question “Should the MDSA exist” and concluded on the basis of three points that it should.

Most important we looked back at the projects to understand the progress made over the past 3 years in the different missionaries. In summary we are truly grateful and blessed. Soshanguve F4 and Soshanguve UU/WW have been institutionalized with Nellmapius and Soshanguve XX planning to be institutionalized by end of 2024. The RSC projects, Lamad and Living Word, is growing and reaching far behind our own South African borders. In Cape Town we have seen positive changes with the inclusion of Proponent Jaco de Beer in Wesbank as well as the engagement with local government to find suitable land for the establishment of a community centre in Leiden.

Given the institution of the above missionary congregations, we evaluated the expected future sizes of the FRC missionaries. Maranata plan to reduce the current four missionaries to two by end of 2025 whilst Cape Town will continue with one full time and one part time (50%) missionary at this point in time.

We summarized the ongoing PR and Reporting efforts which requires more attention since our sponsors have a strong focus to provide feedback to the supporting churches. Obtaining feedback remains a challenge and the importance thereof is still not well understood and managed.

We provided detailed feedback on our interactions with the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) whom we approach as a new sponsor. Unfortunately, CanRC confirmed that no further funds are available for missionary projects. This lead to internal discussions amongst different deputyships including Art 11 to perhaps consider a consolidated approach for international sponsors. We will shortly provide feedback on our local church contributions whereafter considering some way's to obtain further funds such as making people aware to contribute a certain portion of heritages to missionary related work. We conclude with the statement that obtaining funds to cover for shortfalls remain the responsibility of the mission churches and not of the MDSA.

In conclusion, we provided a financial overview as well as a budget for 2024 – 2028 whereby it is clear that from 2025 we will experience a significant yearly shortage. This puts things in perspective and highlight the importance of obtaining additional funds or/and sponsors.

We thank our Lord and Saviour for His generous mercy and love shown to the mission work in our churches, and as always, He provided in people, skills and finances for the work to continue. We trust that the Lord will provide for the continuation of the mission work in the FRCSA.

## 5 Detailed Report

Herewith more details on several topics and points of relevance to this deputyship.

### 5.1 Relationship with ZAM

Our relationship with ZAM/Verre Naasten is still good, but the nature of this relationship has changed a bit. The previous leadership team was able to have extended visits to South Africa, especially during the yearly Mission Indaba. They kept up relationships with the missionaries and other role players. The new leadership team is not able to visit for more than a couple of days, and that makes the building of personal relations a bit harder.

We've discussed the change in inter-church relations, with the FRCSA no longer in a sister relationship with the new NGK bond of churches. ZAM/Verre Naasten again stated that this wouldn't directly influence their continued support of the mission work in South Africa. ZAM does not influence the way we do mission work or the content or doctrines that are being used.

The fusion of two church federations into one NGK and the dissolution of the FRCSA relationship might however have effects that will influence future funding efforts. There might very well be a reluctance from the contributing churches in the Netherlands to keep on fully contributing to the mission with a bond of churches that no longer recognises them. Furthermore, it's within the realm of possibilities that unhappiness with the fusion might lead to a decrease in membership and subsequently lower quotas.

It's good to keep in mind that the churches that form part of ZAM (the northern regions of the Netherlands) have supported us since 1992 when we became responsible for the mission work in SA. Not only money was donated but also advice and prayers to bless the work in South Africa.

### 5.2 Impact of ZAM requirements

ZAM has adopted the DVN principle of supporting local projects up to a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the project. That also means that if we were to cut the total budget of the SA mission to 50% of the current budget, ZAM would fund us up to 50% of that *adjusted* budget.

To be able to reach this target in a sustainable way it is not enough to consider only cost savings and reduction in planned costs. New sources of funds need to be identified, within our bond of churches, as well as overseas. Apart from this, it is important to stimulate new projects which in turn will unlock funds from our sponsors.

### 5.3 Should the MDSA still exist?

In our previous report, we also tabled this question. Given it was clear that the existence of the MDSA is beneficial, we have opted to keep this point on the table for a last time given the further reasoning on this matter. Herewith in summary:

- Our interactions with the new ZAM board over the past two to three years indicated some interest in communicating directly with the mission projects and are encouraging them to directly approach ZAM for funding. We believe this is due to a new board who is settling into their role. As things currently stand, we believe they have a better understanding of the role the MDSA can and will continue to play given this approach. Their focus on receiving feedback directly from the different projects will remain since this is paramount to receiving the necessary funds from the different churches.

- Given the fact that ZAM/Verre Naasten is reducing their support to 50%, the existence of the MDSA do play a more prominent role in the administration of funds though this does not mean that the MDSA is responsible for acquiring funds.
- Our relationship with the Dutch Free Reformed churches has ended and this may mean that some congregations will not accept funding from ZAM/Verre Naasten anymore. This will lead to acquiring different income streams which all need to be administered appropriately and preferably by a central body (MDSA).

In summary, we trust the above points proof the necessity of the MDSA and we believe that these points appropriately support the existence of the MDSA.

## 5.4 What changes were there in supported projects?

Since the previous Synod in 2021 there were quite a few changes in mission projects. A summary herewith follows:

- Soshanguve XX (Rev Matlaela) and Nellmapius (Rev Mnisi) have not changed and are still working towards institution by end of December 2024.
- The work on the Nellmapius church / community center has concluded and is in use by Rev Mnisi.
- Soshanguve UU/WW has been institutionalized on 21 January 2024.
- Soshanguve F4 has been institutionalized on 5 May 2024.
- Rev Boersma is now the pastor of FRC Johannesburg and he is no further involvement on any projects.
- The Living Word project by RSC continues with great success. It aims to help pastors in the exposition and application of a Scripture passage by providing sermon outlines. The Vox Viva project makes use of the same material, but makes it available in a different format (webpage and app). Sermon outlines are prepared to assist pastors with their preaching.
- The Lamad Project by RSC continues to reach more people using a WhatsApp channel. The Lamad Project is about providing simple study courses or Bible studies to the young church. The purpose is to get the young church to read and study, and grow in the fullness that we have received in Jesus Christ.
- Wesbank congregation became independent. Rev C van Wyk is gradually finishing his work there.
- There is no change re Belhar/Leiden. (Rev P Abrahams)
- Fisantekraal is a new mission point (Rev C v Wyk)
- The churches in Cape Town started a new project, preparing Lerende Ouderlinge (Teaching Elders). Preparation takes place during three years of part time training. (Rev v Wyk and many volunteers)
- There was a short project sponsored by ZAM for Covid-19 relief.

## 5.5 Expected future size of FRC mission efforts

Currently Pretoria-Maranata is responsible for four mission projects, and a project around training, development, and support:

- SoshanguveUU/WW and F4 has been instituted.
- Soshanguve XX, planning to institute offices by December 2024
- Nellmapius, planning to institute offices December 2024

Pretoria-Maranata's is planning to reduce the number of missionaries from four in 2020 to two in 2025, the expectation is that two of the missionaries will receive callings from the newly instituted churches.

There are plans that the Pretoria congregation will be involved after the institution of the offices, to assist the newly independent churches with mentorship and other support that may be required.

The GSK (Bellville and Belhar mission committee) working on the Cape Flats is responsible for four projects:

- Training of nine teaching elders. This has already started and is planned to be completed December 2023. There is only one student at the moment. The other students stopped with the course due to different reasons; some became elders at their own congregations, some are studying in Canada at the theological seminary and for some students the challenge of studying was too great.
- Assistance for FRC Wesbank: Since the institution of Wesbank, the missionary has been assisting the congregation and elders the percentage of time that is being utilized is diminishing and is planned to come to an end beginning 2025. Proponent Jaco de Beer is at present working at the FRC in Wesbank. Therefore, the assistance from rev. Carl van Wyk stopped.
- Fisantekraal mission point: institution of the offices will not take place in the foreseen future. The principal reason is difficulty to find a suitable meeting place for Sunday services and other church activities during the week.
- Expansion of Leiden mission point to a multi-preaching point in the surroundings of Delft (Leiden, The Hague, Symphony). Institution of the Delft congregation is delayed due to the availability of a suitable meeting place. The brothers and sisters from the abovementioned suburbs have in the meantime joined the Belhar congregation for their Sunday church meetings. The GSK is currently working closely with the relevant Local Government planning department to require space, for our Leiden Mission in a planned community centre, planned for 2026.

The Cape flats mission projects currently have one fulltime missionary, and one 50% missionary. There are no plans for further reduction or expansion in the years ahead.

## 5.6 PR and Reporting

There are five areas of reporting and information dissemination, here a short overview of each.

1. Local PR. Cape Town and Maranata take turns. One year Cape Town followed by two years of Maranata. We get the impressions that it is difficult for Cape Town to cover all congregations in the North.
2. Overseas PR via written information. Each Mission Project is supposed to provide 4 pieces of information/year via ZAM to the co-operating churches. This takes place via social media and newsletters RSC. Maranata also used to do this via social media, but for the past two years this has been replaced with direct zoom meetings. Representatives from ZAM have online meetings with missionaries. ZAM has confirmed this to be in order with them. Cape Town sends a newsletter every few months.

At the 2023 Mission Indaba these different types of PR material was discussed, ZAM referred this matter to Verre Naasten. Verre Naasten will report back to MDSA on which method they prefer.

3. In the past we had an agreement with ZAM that a missionary would visit the Netherlands once or twice a year, depending on the needs and capacity of the co-operating churches. The Covid

pandemic has stopped this practice for a couple of years and during the 2022 and 2023 mission indaba ZAM also indicated that this would perhaps only happen once every year or every second year, and they will not pay for partners.

4. This did not always go smooth because a missionary is not always available, especially from Cape Town. For the last three years:
  - a. 2020 Spring Rev Kgatle, for a conference, cancelled due to Covid-19
  - b. 2020 Autumn Rev Matlaela, cancelled due to Covid-19
  - c. 2023 Autumn Rev Peter Abrahams
5. Each mission project has to submit a progress report to ZAM twice a year, based on what was planned at the beginning of this period. We are very pleased to see that these reports come in timely.
6. MDSA also has to submit a report to ZAM twice a year outlining what was planned and the results at the end.

## 5.7 Funding, local and abroad

As explained in previous reports, the funding by ZAM will reduce and be in full affect from 2026. For 2024 we foresee a small shortage which we can cover using our last available reserves. From 2025 onwards the effect of this will be felt. Several interactions with possible sponsors have been held as instructed in the previous Synod report and this report will provide a short outline as to where we are today.

Current Status:

- From the previous report, the following must again be noted. MDSA had contact with Deputies Theological Training (Curators) and decided that different deputies should not request financial support from the same church federation. As a gentleman agreement it was agreed that Curators will request the FRCA (Australia) for support and MDSA in Canada (CanRC).
- MDSA approached CanRC but after several interactions it proofed to not be possible due to strict financial governance. Canada will continue to fund students via the Curators. We have also approached CanRC Dunnville individually with the goal to receive support by a church directly but this was also turned down.
- Given the above outcome and decision of Canada to continue supporting our students via the Curators, it was agreed that Curators will approach CanRC first before MDSA approach Australia. CanRC also indicated that there is not more funding that can be given to the Curators, and therefore we sit with a challenge that the current funding for Curators come from Australia, meaning that MDSA cannot approach them, since this will then create a further shortfall within the Curators budget.
- There were multiple discussions between the different Deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa to discuss the option of a more consolidated approach to overseas funders. This also includes the involvement of Art 11 within the instituted churches from an early onset.

Feedback regarding the local churches, the following is to be noted:

- The Jan Hulzer fund donated by Bellville will be depleted by end of 2026.
- Both the congregation of Maranata and Pretoria collects an additional amount for the Mission work. This is not based on a fixed amount, but rather of what the individual donors want to give. In the last three years this amount was paid over to the MDSA. As indicated in the financial report, this amount averaged to R 200 000 per year.



- All the mission points together also committed a specific amount. This has proven difficult to collect.

Other:

- Discussions surround the allocation of heritages towards evangelism as well as diaconal duties has also been receiving more attention.
- After re-planning, the three mission churches are reducing the mission projects: From nine missionaries in 2018 to 7.5 in 2020 to 3 in 2025 subject to missionaries.
- Important to take note that for sustainable evangelism, we should in theory contribute more per member in the church federation for our mission work than our sponsor(s). This was also a principle that was used with the Dutch Mission Deputies (before ZAM took over). It is with this that we request that the synodic contribution be increased as per budget.

The expected and actual income amounts of all above contributions can be found in section 5.8.

Lastly, given the above and the responsibility regarding new funds, the question remains who's responsibility it is to acquire new sponsors to account for shortages. The MDSA cannot be held responsible for the acquisition of funds. We will assist and interact with possible sponsors but we need to act so in conjunction with the different congregations which remain responsible for acquiring funds in the event of a shortfall.

## **5.8 Financial overview, past and future**

The past three years Deputies were able to financially support all the mission projects. The contributions from ZAM as well as the local contributions were sufficient to cover all costs.

Due to a new funding policy adopted by ZAM/Verre Naasten, ZAM has indicated that they, together with Verre Naasten, work towards a 50% funding model, meaning that they will fund 50% of the mission projects in the FRCSA as approved by the MDSA. The reason for this policy is to prevent projects to be too dependent on one sponsor. This is a very reasonable policy. ZAM has been working towards this model and from 2026 we will be fully on this new model.

We have been discussing this issue for quite a while now and has implemented measures previously discussed. We however still sit with a substantial shortfall and has not been able to source new funders. As discussed earlier in this report, there was discussions with both Canada and Australia, but no results yet. The combined fundraising idea that the FRCSA Deputies has discussed seems to be the best way forward. This will allow for more flexibility in the different budgets, meaning that some deputies will not sit with large, accumulated funds, where some other deputies have huge shortfalls. This will be discussed with Australia as well, since they are the biggest funder that will be impacted by this.

There is also a further need to increase local funding, something that has proven difficult, since there are multiple projects that need funding. There is also a need that the projects that is approved by the church councils are more self-sustainable, as well as having achievable cost projections. Currently there are not enough new projects approved, and this makes it difficult for MDSA to have conversations with new funders. We have found that funders will rather start a new project with us, than coming in halfway on al already existing project.

In short, the funding problem for the mission work has not been resolved, but also have not received a lot of attention from the individual committees. This may be because of the expectation

that the MDSA will obtain new funds. As said earlier in this report, MDSA is willing to assist in this matter and is already doing so.

As always, we have a very good relationship with ZAM, and their visits to South Africa are valuable, not only to enhance good relationships but also to receive their advice and inputs for the mission work in SA.

**The income statement:**

<b>Mission Deputies South Africa</b>			
<b>Income statement for the year ending 31 December 2023</b>			
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>4,291,959.56</b>	<b>4,636,123.00</b>	<b>4,217,106.71</b>
Contribution ZAM	3,570,458.60	4,200,000.00	3,500,000.00
SA Synod contribution	441,161.96	265,343.00	541,326.71
SA Additional contributions	280,339.00	170,780.00	175,780.00
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>923,877.11</b>	<b>31,062.69</b>	<b>31,615.29</b>
Interest and investment income	34,549.64	31,062.69	31,615.29
Sale of Bethal assets	889,327.47	-	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>5,215,836.67</b>	<b>4,667,185.69</b>	<b>4,248,722.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>4,541,844.70</b>	<b>4,489,635.74</b>	<b>4,543,120.70</b>
Paid over to Marananta	2,498,000.00	2,295,224.66	2,685,647.00
Paid over to Bellville	1,072,690.39	1,090,094.92	1,139,889.50
Paid over to RSC	513,600.00	630,358.00	685,591.00
Paid over to RSC projects	420,000.00	417,000.00	-
MDSA Costs	37,554.31	56,958.16	31,993.20
<b>Surplus / (Deficit for the year)</b>	<b>673,991.97</b>	<b>177,549.95</b>	<b>(294,398.70)</b>

**Budget for 2024 to 2028:**

<b>Mission Deputies South Africa Budget for 2024 to 2028</b>					
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
<b>Expenses – running costs</b>	<b>5,549,023.76</b>	<b>6,393,267.10</b>	<b>6,764,984.37</b>	<b>7,150,387.84</b>	<b>5,867,370.01</b>
Shared budget Maranata	3,000,000.00	3,669,550.21	3,853,307.42	4,042,857.05	2,525,403.85
Shared budget Bellville	1,838,547.00	1,961,798.00	2,085,200.00	2,218,123.00	2,361,372.00
Johannesburg - RSC	661,876.76	710,402.89	771,869.99	831,524.41	919,237.78
RSC - Once off projects	-	-	-	-	-
Shared budget SD-SA	48,600.00	51,516.00	54,606.96	57,883.38	61,356.38
<b>TOTAL RUNNING EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,549,023.76</b>	<b>6,393,267.10</b>	<b>6,764,984.37</b>	<b>7,150,387.84</b>	<b>5,867,370.01</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>1,424,806.00</b>	<b>1,557,990.36</b>	<b>1,689,610.58</b>	<b>1,834,371.52</b>	<b>1,235,990.40</b>
Contribution – VGKSA	476,406.00	504,990.36	535,289.78	567,407.17	601,451.60
Cape town – Jan Hulzer fund	443,000.00	518,000.00	588,000.00	667,500.00	-
Cape town – additional offerings	65,000.00	68,900.00	73,034.00	77,416.00	82,061.00
Extra contributions by FRC Classis-North	378,000.00	400,680.00	424,720.80	450,204.05	477,216.29
Contributions Tshwane mission congregations	50,400.00	52,920.00	55,566.00	58,344.30	61,261.52
Interest Received	12,000.00	12,500.00	13,000.00	13,500.00	14,000.00
<b>TOTAL REQUIREMENT – RUNNING BUDGET</b>	<b>4,124,217.76</b>	<b>4,835,276.74</b>	<b>5,075,373.79</b>	<b>5,316,016.32</b>	<b>4,631,379.60</b>
ZAM	4,096,000.00	3,696,000.00	2,537,686.90	2,658,008.16	2,315,689.80
Surplus / (Shortage)	(28,217.76)	(1,139,276.74)	(2,537,686.90)	(2,658,008.16)	(2,315,689.80)

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