Northern Synod

TASK TEAM CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MINISTRY FUND

Report

1. BACKGROUND

A previous SSC of the Northern Synod in 2022 created a task team led by James Kirkpatrick. This task team had to examine situations where the ministers were not receiving the full pay due to them.

The task team found, however, that this initial approach was not the best point of departure. The question should rather be, “Is there adequate ministry in all the congregations?” The denomination’s must be concerned about the ministry of and by the members of congregations. The Northern Synod cannot afford that ministry should suffer neglect in less affluent communities. When ministry is supported, the position of the minister, as well as his/her remuneration, is inevitably also attended to.

To make this possible, the task team decided that congregations should be encouraged to support the Ministry Fund out of their surplus funds. At the 2022 session the following was decided consequent to their report:

> *PROPOSAL:*
>
> *In light of the growing ministry needs of congregations, we agree that congregations with a surplus on their audited statements will give between* 3% to 6% *of it to the Ministry Fund.*
>
> *AMENDMENT:*
>
> *In light of the growing ministry needs of congregations, we agree that congregations with a surplus on their audited statements will give a percentage of it to the Ministry Fund.*
>
> *APPROVED*
>
> *The percentage to be contributed by each congregation is referred to the SSC for further reflection.*

APPROVED

2. TASK TEAM

Task team leader: Wynand van Niekerk

Task team members: Stephan Barac, Paul Grobler (ex officio), Rehan Rheeder, Andries Smal, Cobus van Wyngaard.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK TEAM

This task team was created to determine what the percentage should be. The previous task team's estimate of 3% to 6% was used as a guideline.

The task team studied the matter and also got input from the presbyterial representatives for funds. The task team also requested a broader mandate, and the following decision was made at the SSC meeting of 24 July 2024:

- *The SSC instructs the Task Team for Contributions from Surplus Funds that for the Ministry Fund a clear needs assessment with goals should be set up.*
    - *This needs assessment must also consider the work done by the Task Team Future and the Task Team Ministry Model*
    - *A budget, or fair total annual amount, must be set up for the Ministry Fund, based on the needs assessment.*
- *To enable the execution of the above decision, the mandate for the Task Team for Contributions from Surplus Funds is expanded to investigate a variety of models by means of which the Ministry Fund can be supported.*

The task team emphasises that the Ministry Fund exists to make ministry possible in the whole synodal region. It enlarges the footprint of the DR Church within our synodal region.

This fund is not connected to the synod's usual budget. Any extra contributions by congregations to this fund are used for ministry in congregations. A special task team is appointed to ensure that this fund is utilised fairly and consistently.

The task team stresses the importance of the fund and encourages congregations to contribute to it.

The task team is of the opinion that it is extremely difficult to determine measurable goals for the Ministry Fund that take the realities and abilities of congregations into account. Other models were also considered, but the task team judges that at present congregations will probably not take kindly to an increased obligation regarding contributions, even if these increased obligations come from the ordinary Contributions for Joint Work (CJW) or from surpluses.

The task team thinks that the practice of voluntary contributions to the Ministry Fund must grow, and that congregations should rather be encouraged in this. Congregations can then decide for themselves whether they want to contribute to the Ministry Fund, and what percentage of their surpluses they want to donate. The synod is encouraged to market this fund purposefully and to motivate congregations to contribute.

At the reconciliation of their financial statements, congregations have begun to determine whether they have paid over too much or too little to CJW. If they have paid too much and are entitled to a refund by the Northern Synod, some congregations have requested for their refund to be rerouted to the Ministry Fund. This practice can be extended.

4. OUTCOME

4.1. In light of the growing ministry needs of congregations, the Northern Synod asks congregations to donate a voluntary percentage of the congregations' surplus according to audited statements to the Ministry Fund.

4.2. This means that Synod House can ask congregations in writing to donate a percentage of their surplus to the Ministry Fund.

4.3. Moreover, it means that Synod House can ask congregations, who at the end of a financial year are entitled to a refund from the Synod, to donate the refund voluntarily to the Ministry Fund.

5. CLOSING WORD

Herewith the task team regards its work as concluded.