

27.2 REPORT 2: DEPUTIES TURNAROUND STRATEGY (Artt 80, 100, 251, 260)

- A. Rev P Venter tables the Report.
- B. **Decision:** Point 2.3.1 are referred to the Commission for Finances. Certain aspects of formulation in the current point, as mentioned in discussion, to an ad hoc commission: Dr GJ Meijer (s), rev GP van Rhyn and prof GJC Jordaan as advisor.
- C. **Decision:** Point 2.3.2 are referred to the Commission for Finances.
- D. Rev P Venter reports on behalf of the ad hoc commission.
- E. Rev PJ Nel reports on behalf of the Commission for Finances.

F. REPORT

1. Mandate

- 1.1 *Report of the Deputies for training elders and assistance to churches with spreading the Gospel (24.6, Acta 2012:484)*
 - 1.1.1 Determine the training needs of ministers and congregations within the GKSA.
 - 1.1.2 Ascertain the availability of training material (national and international) that meet these specific training needs.
 - 1.1.2.1 Contact training institutions, both nationally and international. A meeting is to be arranged with the TSP, Faculty of Theology and Continuing Ministry Training Desk.
 - 1.1.2.2 Conduct a survey among the churches of the GKSA on the material already offered in congregations and that which can be made available.
 - 1.1.2.3 Evaluate the available training material, in reference to the following criteria:
 - 1.1.2.3.1 Content (Scriptural and dogmatic purity).
 - 1.1.2.3.2 The method of presentation (for the sake of practical delivery) – modern media must take priority.
 - 1.1.2.3.3 Level of applicability (diploma/certificate/degree).
 - 1.1.2.3.4 Seamless integration of a larger training strategy for the churches.
 - 1.1.2.4 Attend to the accreditation of approved training material for provision and implementation inside (and outside) the GKSA.
 - 1.1.2.5 Attend to church accreditation of material (“tested” within congregations).
 - 1.1.2.6 Cooperate with training institutions for other accreditation (certificate/diploma).
 - 1.1.2.7 Attend to the translation of approved material for use within all churches.
 - 1.1.2.8 Coordinate training opportunities within the GKSA.
 - 1.1.2.9 Introduce training material at regional level.
 - 1.1.2.10 Provide assistance to Regional Synods with the presentation of training opportunities.
 - 1.2 *Point of Description of Regional Synod Pretoria on further training of ministers (24.14, Acta 2012:504)*
 - 1.2.1 Church Councils are requested to enable the minister to obtain further training for the ministry as much as possible.
 - 1.2.2 Church Councils are requested to cooperate in the provision, accreditation and use of training material and opportunities that are geared to promotion of the ministry.
 - 1.3 *Point of Description of Regional Synod North West on theological training (24.15, Acta 2012:506)*

The Point of Description made a number of requests, which was addressed through the appointment of the Deputies Turnaround Strategy. These requests were that:

 - 1.3.1 urgent and active attention be given to the need of churches for theological training, by means of short courses as well as at accredited Certificate and Diploma level.
 - 1.3.2 the theological degree of ministers be adapted to make the missionary (missional) commission, from the Kingdom perspective, a fundamental part of the training.

- 1.3.3 the above matters be addressed in addition and in accordance to the decisions of the National Synod (Potchefstroom), Acta 2003 (728, 1:1) and 2006 (806, 2.3.7.12) and the General Synod, Acta 2009 (813, 1.5).

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.3.3 noted.

2. Execution

The Deputies report on the above instructions (1.1-1.3) as follows:

2.1 Instructions

2.2 Matters for the Synod's information

- 2.2.1 The Synod of the GKSA have endeavoured for years to enable training for churches that may lead to reformation and sound growth of churches. The following was decided at Synod 2009 (Acta 2009:451-452):
- 2.2.1.1 Churches and ministers are to be called on to seriously attend to the training of elders.
- 2.2.1.2 The TSP is to offer clear guidance to aspiring ministers on the nature, content and standard of elder training
- 2.2.1.3 Churches are to consider offering courses to elders on a regular basis, at congregation, classis or regional synod level to ensure continuous training.
- 2.2.1.4 These courses are to *inter alia* include the following:
- 2.2.1.4.1 Instruction in basic applicable facets of hermeneutics, exegesis and revelation history.
- 2.2.1.4.2 Instruction in church doctrine, focussed on the Confessions of the Reformed Churches.
- 2.2.1.4.3 Principles and practice of Reformed Church Governance
- 2.2.1.4.4 Principles and practice of pastoral ministry
- 2.2.1.4.5 Principles and practice of Missiology and Apologetics
- 2.2.1.5 Deputies have been appointed to:
- 2.2.1.5.1 execute the instructions given;
- 2.2.1.5.2 aid churches in developing training courses
- 2.2.1.5.3 providing alternative curricula
- 2.2.1.5.4 reading material for further academic training of elders (diverse, specific and specialised ministry).
- 2.2.2 All instructions were combined into the overall instruction of the Deputies Turnaround Strategy at the Synod of 2012, to provide in this need.
- 2.2.3 The Faculty of Theology have already endeavoured for quite some time to present continuing theological training courses, which only occurred sporadically and a permanent structure could never be established, mainly due to a lack in capacity and allotted funds.
- 2.2.4 The Deputies Turnaround Strategy met with the senate of TSP over the curriculum of minister training as well as the presentation of continuing training.
- 2.2.5 There is clearly a great need for coordinated training of ministers and elders, to aid local congregations to fulfil their responsibility. Deputies provide guidance and material that Church Councils may grow. Ministers and Church Councils have together created a culture of continuing internal training.
- 2.2.6 The principle on which continuing ministry training is based is the Scripture model of Ephesians 4:11-16 and Acts 6, viz. that the special services are training gifts to equip and train believers to conduct their work of building the body of Christ in the office of the believer (HC, Sunday 12) and that the local church, as body of Christ, will build itself up in love.

- 2.2.7 This further continuing ministry training for ministers and members must especially focus on the turnaround strategy. If ministers and Church Councils don't take the lead in local churches, the turnaround strategy will not get off the ground (from the response to a questionnaire and at discussions at Regional and Classis conferences and minister gatherings many ministers and Church Council members indicated that they have a great need for continuing ministry training. This confirms the findings of the Report of the Deputies on the preservation and growth of the church of Synod 2009).
- 2.2.8 The meetings between the TSP, the Faculty of Theology and the Deputies Turnaround Strategy gave rise to the conviction to collaborate in creating a structure that could provide for these needs and present a variety of formal and semi-formal courses on church revival and congregation building, for Reformed and other churches, to aid churches towards becoming healthier evangelisation and missional churches. The idea is for the university to formal accredit such courses that whoever may be interest would acquire credits that could upon attending at a number of courses lead to obtaining a post-graduate diploma or degree. (The Deputies, for example, learned of 18-month courses that the IPB in Brazil offers on church planting and church revival, through modern distance learning systems, by their Jumper Graduate School of Theology that could enable admission to a master's degree and even eventually a doctorate in Practical Theology or Missiology.)
- 2.2.9 The Deputies also met with the management of Docenda¹ in terms of cooperation and the use of their facilities for the presentation of short courses for continuing ministry training. The possibility of financing by Docenda of the continuing ministry training will be further investigated.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.2.9 noted.

2.3 *Business for decision taking by the Synod*

2.3.1 Recommendations

- 2.3.1.1 A Centre for Ministry Training and Guidance (CMTG) is to be established under the supervision of the Curators.
- 2.3.1.2 A coordinator (director) is to be nominated by the curators, to manage the centre.
- 2.3.1.3 The Deputies for Church Growth ministry and other role players can partake in the establishing and functioning of the centre.
- 2.3.1.4 The instruction of the centre and the job description of the coordinator may be the following:
- 2.3.1.4.1 The development of the relevant short courses needed for ministry training and guidance, in view of the instruction of this Report.
- 2.3.1.4.2 The review and provision of already existing short courses.
- 2.3.1.4.3 The recruitment of writers and experts locally and abroad for the development of courses, to ensure that continuing ministry training and relevant training for ministers and members are provided.

¹Docenda is a non-profit company that was established upon the initiative of the GKSA's curators. The company aims to enable students who cannot come to Potchefstroom to study theology at the Faculty of Theology of the NWU at open-learning centres across South Africa and Namibia via modern technology. Congregations of the GKSA are involved in this initiative by making their facilities available as open-learning centres and facilitators for lectures. The intent is also for congregations to become involved with the students (mostly lay preachers) as well as the churches and communities from which they come. Docenda has made great progress with a funding model that will make it possible that congregations' involvement does not place a financial burden on them, but only offer the congregations practical opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel.

- 2.3.1.4.4 The facilitation of training for ministers, office-bearers and members.
- 2.3.1.4.5 The training of ministers to facilitate and present such courses at regional level.
- 2.3.1.4.6 The marketing of the relevant short courses of the Faculty of Theology and the TSP amongst members.
- 2.3.1.4.7 The marketing of relevant courses of Mukhanyo Theological College, offered via distance learning, amongst members.
- 2.3.1.4.8 The further investigation of cooperation with Docenda.
- 2.3.1.5 The relevant courses offered by the Faculty of Theology (as far as possible) and the TSP are to be marketed, by means of whiteboard and other distance learning technology, amongst members.
- 2.3.1.6 The training of ministers and elders is to be coordinated to enable local congregations to meet their own responsibilities. The CMTG and Deputies are to offer guidance and material that the Church Councils may grow. Ministers and Church Councils must create a culture of training amongst members.
- 2.3.1.7 A special website is to be created to provide training material software that churches can easily download and use, where a variety of training material designed elsewhere can be critically reviewed and where relevant lectures and sermons can also be provided in .mp3 and .mp4 format for easy use by churches.
- 2.3.1.8 This further training for ministers must especially focus on the turnaround strategy as point of departure. If ministers don't take the lead in this, the turnaround strategy will not take off.

Decision: Points 2.3.1 to 2.3.1.8 are referred to the Commission for Finances.

Decision: Points 2.3.1.1 to 2.3.1.4, as recommended, approved.

2.3.2 Financial implications of establishing the CMTG

- 2.3.2.1 There needs to be start-up capital for the *honoraria* of the staff (coordinator/director and administrative assistant), travel and accommodation expenses (where necessary), marketing costs and publication costs.
- 2.3.2.2 At the beginning (probably the first 2 to 3 years) all necessary funds will have to be raised, but at some point a source of income will have to be generated through the presentation of training opportunities and material that will need to make the initiative into a sustainable endeavour. The GKSA Curators will have to take responsibility for raising funds from the churches and eventually call a professor or appoint a called professor on a full-time or part-time basis as director of the project. (Communitas of the Dutch Reformed Church, for example, finance their project by means of course and publication income as well as through continual fundraising and funding by their synods.)
- 2.3.2.3 In light of the tremendous need for ministry training (as indicated in the Points of Description that led to this Report) and the need for training in terms of the turnaround strategy, the Deputies plead that a way be found to finance the CMTG. This financing will serve as seed money that could have a huge impact on the future of the GKSA.
- 2.3.2.4 The Deputies, therefore, recommend that the to be appointed Deputies be instructed to explore and if possible already put in place an initial financing plan through the church, together with the Curators and Management of the Administrative Bureau.

Decision: Points 2.3.2 to 2.3.2.4 referred to the Commission Finances.

2.3.3 Theological training

Theological training should form an important part of the turnaround strategy. If church leaders are not trained and motivated, there is little chance for renewal. This makes it important to consider anew the method and content of theological training and especially the training of ministers.

The following matters need to be addressed:

2.3.3.1 The content of training

The composition of the overall curriculum must be evaluated in terms of its philosophy, logical sequencing, actuality, missional orientation and increased training of candidates.

This will also necessitate the evaluation, by the Senate and Curators, of all modules in terms of its content and its relevance.

(Please see the dissertation of G van Wyk (2014) in this regard.)

2.3.3.2 The method of training

Comprehensive research will have to be conducted to determine the most effective way of training ministers. Research on the use of distance learning, in-service training, learning through experience, learning through observation and mentorship as well as their advantages and disadvantages should be undertaken.

Students should be trained as trainers. Ministers must be able to equip congregations for their service and to compile training material as well as judge existing material. They would need comprehensive training for this.

As part of the overall training, students must be purposefully guided (in cooperation with local congregations) towards growth in faith and a life in the presence of the Lord.

It must be endeavoured in general to develop students into serving leaders, develop their ministry skills even further by means of in-service training and develop their intellectual abilities and gifts in an integrated way.

Decision: Points 2.3.3 to 2.3.3.2 approved.

2.3.4 Recommendation

It is recommended that the senate of the TSP, in cooperation with the Curators, be tasked with this instruction.

Decision: Approved.

2.3.5 The to be appointed Deputies are to be tasked with executing 4.1.1 to 4.2.4.

Decision: Approved.

2.3.6 That uncompleted mandates of Synod 2009 re service of elder (Acta 2009:452, 5 and Acta 2009:824, 3.17) are referred to named Deputies Church Growth Ministry.

Decision: Approved (amendments already added – Deputies Acta).

G. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. 27.2, Report 2 of the Deputies Turnaround Strategy, pt 2.3.2.

Decision: Noted.

2. Matters that the Synod take note of

2.1 Members of the Deputies Church growth ministry discussed the matter with the Commission and provided additional information.

2.2 The Commission concentrated their discussion on pt 2.3.2.4 as this is the main issue mentioned in pt.2.3.2.

Decision: Points 2.1 and 2.2 noted.

3. Matters that the Synod decide on

- 3.1 That the to be appointed Deputies Church growth ministry together with the Curators, the Management of the Administrative Bureau and the Faculty Theology should investigate a finance plan and if possible, start implementing the plan.
- 3.2 That the to be appointed Deputies act as convener.

Decision: Points 3.1 and 3.2 approved.