

18. Youth and Education

18.1 REPORT : DEPUTIES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (Artt 75, 201, 255, 284)

- A. Dr EJ de Beer delivers the Report.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to Commission Youth and Education.
- C. **Decision:** Matters of financial importance are referred to the Commission for Finances.
- D. Dr VE d' Assonville reports on behalf of the Commission for Youth and Education.
- E. Br P Bisschoff provides information on ARSO by means of an audio-visual presentation. The chairperson thanks the brother and wishes them well.
- F. Rev PJ Nel reports on behalf of the Commission for Finances.

G. REPORT

The Deputies charged several sub-commissions with the task of attending to the various briefs. The sub-commissions reported back to the entire group of Deputies on a regular basis.

1. Website, Information and Communication

1.1 *Brief:* The Deputies to be appointed consider abbreviation of the study report (on the theory of evolution) and summarize the contents (Acta 2006:344, 1.4.2).

1.1.1 Execution of the brief

The study report was abbreviated and disseminated to all the churches.

Decision: Noted.

1.2 *Brief:* A clearer assessment of 'Theistic Evolution' should receive attention (Acta 2006:344, 1.4.3)

1.2.1 Execution of the brief

Although this problem was repeatedly discussed in both the sub-commission for Learning Material and in meetings of all the Deputies together, the Deputies could not come to a final conclusion.

Decision: Noted.

1.2.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

Synod 2009 is requested to appoint Study Deputies for the purpose of formulating a clearer Scriptural assessment of Theistic Evolution. This should be done in view of a Genesis 1 and 2 and other relevant parts of Scripture.

Decision: Approved with the following assignments:

Ad hoc-deputies with experts from different disciplines are appointed based on 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 – see Acta 2003 (424-428, 4.2) and Acta 2006 (343 and 344, 1.2.7-1.4.4 – with the following assignments:

1. The active apologetic handling of the evolutionism on different terrains, but especially with regard to education.
2. The equipment of parents and teachers from different language groups and backgrounds with the necessary thoroughly founded, yet simple and understandable literature and media (audio-visual) aids in this regard, preferably in the mother tongue.
3. An in-depth study of the matter of belief and science (including among other things the theistic evolutionism and other theories in handling this matter).

1.3 *Brief:* The Deputies to be appointed plan the best way of disseminating the study report to Church Councils, covenantal parents and educators (Acta 2006:344, 1.4.4).

1.3.1 Execution of the brief

A more concise study report entitled 'Evolution Theory in the learning content that our children have to master: How should Reformed parents approach it?' was sent out to

all the Church Councils in the RCSA on 14 November 2006 by the Chair Person (DJ de Kock) and the Secretary of the Deputies (JH Howell).

Decision: Noted.

1.4 *Brief:* The website of the Deputies for Christian Education should be maintained with funds made available to the Deputies (Acta 2006:363, 1.1.3.1).

Decision: Noted.

1.4.1 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

Synod is requested to examine the possibility of having the website of the Deputies for CE function independently from that of the Deputies for Information Technology. This will expedite the updating and maintenance of the website.

Decision: Approved with the following addition: Liaison and coordination in this regard with the webmaster and parties involved with the GKSA web page is crucial, both for technical aspects and corporate image, but also for the sake of the creation and maintenance of different links between relevant web pages. Attention should be paid to links with other web pages, locally and overseas, in which the same principles of the communal themes are touched upon.

1.5 *Brief:* That, in view of the recommendation above, the Deputies to be appointed consider publishing on the website all unpublished documents as well as new documents compiled after the Synod meeting, in doing so bringing the churches abreast with the latest available information (Acta 2006:363, 1.1.3.2).

Decision: Noted.

1.5.1 Execution of the brief

Your Deputies hereby report that the website has been updated and that a variety of documents on Christian education has been made available in pdf format. Links have been created with other organisations for Christian education.

Decision: Approved. The to-be-appointed Deputies publish the unpublished documents and new documents that may appear after the Synod on the web page to bring churches up to date with regard to the new information and material available.

1.6 *Brief:* That the Deputies to be appointed take cognisance of the work that is being done in local churches (church communities, congregations) in creating various websites (Acta 2006:363, 1.1.3.3).

Decision: Noted.

1.6.1 Execution of the brief

The redesign and updating of the Deputies' website was done by a member of a local congregation.

Decision: Approved. The to-be-appointed Deputies take note of the work done in local churches to establish web pages and to maintain them.

2. Independent schools and home schooling

2.1 *Brief:* Parents and Church Councils should once again be reminded that they, given the fact that religion education in schools has been reduced to an absolute minimum, have a much more momentous task than in the past with respect to the religion education of their children (Acta 2006:346, 2.3.1).

2.1.1 Execution of the brief

A circular containing all the resolutions of Synod 2006 with respect to Christian education was sent to all Church Councils. It was entitled Information and Communication with respect to the Principles and Practice of Christian Education. Church Councils were requested to publish excerpts from it in their newsletters.

Decision: Noted.

2.1.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

The Deputies for CE request the Synod to appeal to Church Councils to identify young church members for encouraging them to regard the teaching profession as a vocation and to prepare themselves for the profession.

Decision: Approved. Deputies appeal to Church Councils to encourage children in their congregations who have the necessary gifts to study education due to the

current shortage in teachers and the foreseeable growing shortage.

2.2 *Brief:* A person or persons should once again be appointed as Deputy(-ies) for the purpose of liaising with the various institutions and associations involved in independent Christian education / home schooling, such as the VCHO, ARSO, ARTO, BCVO.

2.2.1 Execution of the brief

Your Deputies have liaised with all these associations. See addenda A to D.

Decision: Noted.

2.2.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

The brief to be continued.

Decision: Approved. A person/persons should be appointed to the Deputy group to liaise with different institutions involved in independent Christian education, training and home schooling, for instance ARSO/AROS, ARTO, BCVO, VCHO or similar societies/institutions, as well as institutions such as the OAER (Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad – Independent Afrikaans Exam Council).

2.3 *Brief:* Church Councils are requested to energetically and purposefully support and promote the founding and the maintenance of independent Reformed schools (Acta 2006:346, 2.3.3).

Decision: Noted.

2.3.1 Execution of the brief

The resolution of Synod 2006 were sent to Church Councils in the form of circulars. Churches, Church Councils, congregations and regional synods were visited by ARSO for the purpose of acquainting them with reformed education and support them in establishing schools.

Decision: Approved. In accordance with CO, art 21 Church Councils are requested support the establishment/maintenance of independent Reformed parent schools and/of Reformed home schooling by parents in word and deed.

2.4 *Brief:* That Synod recommend the VCHO Bible Instruction for use by parents at family prayers and by teachers in schools (Acta 2006:346, 2.3.4).

Decision: Noted.

2.4.1 Execution of the brief

The resolutions of Synod 2006 were disseminated among Church Councils. The Deputies for CE's website was used for recommending the use of the VCHO's Bible Instruction.

Decision: Approved. The recommendation of VCHO-Bible education assistance and the aids of ARSO (in the process of development with GK Rietvallei) for use by parents at home devotions and by teachers in schools.

2.5 *Brief:* That Synod recommend the books compiled by ARSO for use by teachers in public (state) schools as well as in independent schools, and also by parents, including for home schooling (Acta 2006:346, 2.3.5.)

Decision: Noted.

2.5.1 Execution of the brief

A letter introducing ARSO books was sent to all the local church communities. The most recent order form was included. A complete set of ARSO books was bought with the kind aid of a sponsor and made available to members of the Church in Namibia. The purpose of the exercise was to give Namibians access to reformed learning materials so that they could order such materials for home schooling, Christian schools and for use by Christian teachers in public schools.

Funds collected for the development of learning materials was handed over to ARSO for the promotion of its text book project. A report on the progress with this project can be found in addendum A.

Decision: Approved. Synod recommends the text books compiled by ARSO for use by teachers in public schools/independent schools and for parents who do home schooling.

2.6 *Brief:* That Church Councils be encouraged to invite institutions involved in reformed education / home schooling to introduce themselves to the Church Councils (Acta 2006:346, 2.3.6).

2.6.1 Execution of the brief

Several local congregations, regional synods, female members' organisations and female members' rallies were visited and addressed by representatives from ARSO.

Decision: Noted.

2.6.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

That the brief be continued.

Decision: Approved. Church Councils are encouraged to invite institutions who are involved in Reformed education and training or home schooling to present themselves to congregations. Addresses, telephone numbers and other information is available from the deputies.

3. Interdenominational Council – IC

3.1 *The Synod takes cognisance*

The following document was drafted on behalf of the Reformed Churches in response to the pledge of loyalty for schools proposed by the Minister of Education:

The Deputies for Christian Education of the Reformed Churches in South Africa share the concern of the Minister of Education about the moral decay in our country, and view her proposed pledge of / commitment to loyalty as an honest effort to stamp out the problem.

However, based on considerations of faith and education, the Deputies cannot support this proposal of the Minister for the following reasons:

1. The Minister of Education's proposed 'oath of loyalty' is unacceptable to believers in the Bible because of the clear Biblical injunction against the taking of an oath (cf Matt 5:33-37 and James 5:12).
2. Even if the word 'pledge' as used by the Minister could be interpreted as 'declaration' or 'undertaking' we would still object against a regular declaration or undertaking.
 - 2.1 It is not the primary task or duty of the school to combat political and social evils. Such a 'declaration' would take the school beyond its primary competency sphere, which is pedagogical instruction.
 - 2.2 A daily 'declaration' proclaimed by a group (albeit voluntarily) amounts in our opinion to a form of indoctrination. Should the Government of the day lose power, the 'declaration' would also have to be rephrased in order to adapt to the political stance of the new Government.
3. We are convinced that this oath, pledge or commitment to loyalty, especially in its present form, would contribute to further divisions in our country rather than promoting unity and harmony.

Based on all of the above, we unfortunately have to reject this oath / declaration / commitment to loyalty in the schools. On the one hand, we regard it as a form of indoctrination and therefore as unpedagogical. Indoctrination robs the children in our schools from their constitutional right to freedom of thought, expression and conviction. On the other hand, it transgresses the boundaries of what schools as societal relationships are supposed to do. In our opinion, the authorities are here contriving to achieve something that is politically important only to themselves.

We are furthermore of the opinion that the moral and value degeneration in our country (to which all the crime and violence attest) should be seen as a result of the fact that the current value system with which the political and educational authorities operate has not been founded in clear and definite religious convictions. Moral decay is the inevitable result of an empty and religiously unfounded value system. An oath / declaration / commitment to loyalty founded in such a value system is likewise empty and insignificant. The Deputies for Christian Education of the Reformed Churches in South Africa are prepared and willing to contribute towards (a) the creation of a value

system filled with significant content, and (b) in doing so, collaborate in the struggle against the wave of moral degeneration currently ravaging our country.

This document was sent through to the Interdenominational Council as well as to the Deputies for Liaison with the Government. It was also published in the form of a press release.

Decision: Noted.

4. Learning Materials

4.1 *Brief:* Churches are requested to devote one special funds collection annually to the development of learning materials (Acta 2006:348, 4.1.1.2).

4.1.1 Execution of the brief

ARSO's text book project has developed well because of the financial support of the local congregations. ARSO wishes to extend its heartfelt gratitude to all the congregations.

Decision: Noted.

4.1.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

ARSO estimates that it will take another three years for the text book project to near completion, and would be grateful if the congregations would continue with their financial support (special collections of funds).

Decision: Approved as amended. Church Councils are asked to give a compulsory annual collection for a further term until the following Synod in 2012 for the development of lesson material (text books) by ARSO. The deputies will monitor this project and will advise the next Synod regarding the continued support of this project for the further development of the lesson material.

4.2 *Brief:* Keep track of tendencies in the curriculum and in education in general (Acta 2006:350, 4.1.6.2.1).

4.2.1 Execution of the brief

The evolution theory currently appears in all the learning areas, and it often is the life-view in terms of which the particular learning materials are presented to the learners. The Deputies did not find it within their power or means to assess all the text books and discover all the problem areas. It is therefore essential for children to take up the full weaponry of God in order to remain standing. This implies that they should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Word of God.

Decision: Noted.

4.2.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

This aspect should receive particular attention from elders during pastoral visits.

Decision: Approved. Elders and members should be equipped in the apologetical handling of evolutionism with which children are confronted in their education and syllabi. Material can be requested from the to-be-appointed Deputies and from ARSO.

4.3 *Brief:* Monitor all the available text books for educational purposes and advise Church Councils and members about the usefulness of learning materials (Acta 2006:350, 4.1.6.2.2).

4.3.1 Execution of the brief

Afrikaans schools mostly use the Bateleur text book series as well as those of Future Entrepreneurs. The learning materials contained in them are not specifically Biblically founded, but are nevertheless suitable for use in the public school system where no particular religion may be proclaimed or promoted. Sensitive content should be monitored and transferred to the learners in the desired perspective. It is important for learning materials in the text books to which Reformed learners are exposed to be analysed and assessed at local level.

The text books developed by ARSO to a large extent meet the criteria and assessment standards of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). These books provide a Biblical perspective with respect to the manner in which learning content can be provided to children in public schools, and can be fruitfully utilized by educators in those schools as well as by parents, especially in the learning area Life

Orientation. Bible Instruction textbooks can be used in catechism as auxiliary materials.

Decision: Noted.

4.3.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

- (a) Based on CO, art 21 and with reference to the baptismal promise local church councils are encouraged to show covenant parents on their responsibility in this regard – the content of their children’s text books – and to equip them.
- (b) Local church councils are pointed to the fact that ARSO can be of help with the assessment of specific text books and that parents can contact ARSO in this regard.
- (c) Church Councils are encouraged to make text books compiled by ARSO available at local schools and to introduce them, since it can be used with great fruit.

Decision: Approved as ammended – changes already included – Deputies Acta.

5. Liaison with Members in Foreign countries

5.1 *Briefs*

- 5.1.1 Brief 1: That information about the Reformed and other syllabi to which reference is made in this report, be disseminated as widely as possible by the newly appointed Deputies to members in neighbouring countries.
- 5.1.2 Brief 2: That the Deputies for Ecumenical affairs also pay attention to matters pertaining to education (including information about learning content) in the process of attending to their brief. That the newly appointed Deputies for Christian Education make available material on CD to the Deputies for Ecumenical affairs.
- 5.1.3 Brief 3: That all Reformed church members will constantly pray for covenantal parents and children in isolated circumstances.
- 5.1.4 Brief 4: That the newly appointed deputies, in cooperation with ARSO and other reformed educational institutions, present if possible a seminar for Christian parents in the entire southern Africa (Kenya and further south).

5.2 *Matters that the Synod should take cognisance of*

- 5.2.1 Information was gathered with respect to educational conditions in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mocambique. In the latter three countries, Reformed parents prefer to send their children to RSA schools. Namibia already boasts with 10 fully functioning Christian private schools. The ARSO syllabi were introduced at the Tsumeb Gymnasium in Tsumeb, Namibia, and administered by Mr Louis van der Linde. From here it is being disseminated to other schools for consideration and implementation.
Other syllabi are being widely disseminated through the media, also in the neighbouring countries; the Deputies did not pay any further attention to them.
- 5.2.2 The AROS learning materials will be made available during August 2008 on CD to the Deputies for Ecumenical affairs.
- 5.2.3 Your Deputies indeed trust that Reformed church members are constantly in prayer for covenantal parents and children in isolated circumstances.
- 5.2.4 Your Deputies are involved in collecting information about Reformed teachers in all our churches, also in the neighbouring countries. Plans to hold a seminar have not yet materialised, among others because of the high costs involved. The newly appointed Deputies can negotiate further about this.

Decision: Points 5.1.1 to 5.2.4 noted.

5.3 *The Synod resolves*

- 5.3.1 That contact with Reformed parents and Reformed schools in our neighbouring countries be further strengthened.
- 5.3.2 The Reformed syllabi be made available in our neighbouring countries, and that the budget of the Deputies provides for a number of complete sets of text books of ARSO (at around R6000.00 per complete set) to be handed over to Christian schools and Reformed parents in our neighbouring countries.

- 5.3.3 That the Deputies CE expand liaison with Reformed parents and schools in our neighbouring countries and wherever else it is applicable (for instance where previous members in other parts of the world have the need) and that all relevant information and support material is made available to these persons and institutions as widely as possible. (In general there can be cooperation with the Deputies Ecumenicity; it is suggested that contact with Zambia is coordinated with GK Thabazimbi – see 8.2.8.11.)
- 5.3.4 That a seminar for Christian teachers receive further attention, and that such a seminar be presented in a cost effective manner with the assistance of ARSO and other Reformed educational institutions, as well as the Faculty of Educational sciences of the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU.
- 5.3.5 That the theme(s) of such a seminar be determined by the different roleplayers.

Decision: Approved as amended – changes already included – Deputies Acta.

6. Monitor developments in education

- 6.1 *Brief.* Take cognisance of tendencies in curriculum development and in education in general (part of brief 4.2) (Acta 2006:350, 4.1.6.2.1).

The current Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, said in her budget speech that she intended to use education and schooling in South Africa for effecting change. Events during the past three years, such as proposed legislation and the proposed policy with regard to the so-called education oath has confirmed her intentions. In her budget speech on 15 May 2008, she said: 'Education changes lives, changes communities.' This is true, but it can be asked: What is the nature of the changes? Changes to achieve what?

6.1.1 Execution of the brief

During each of their meetings in the past three years, the Deputies for CE discussed these questions as well as other topics. The Deputies addressed serious developments that surfaced in newspaper reports, on the radio and the television. The following can be mentioned:

- (a) The inclusion of evolutionism as a theme in the curriculum
- (b) The proposed education oath to be taken by every learner.
- (c) The deteriorating situation in public schools with respect to security, discipline and order.
- (d) Independent schools as the alternative.
- (e) The challenges posed by shortages of learning materials, the writing and publication of learning materials, the encouragement of parents not to expose their children to the new curriculum, etc.
- (f) The discharge of the Principal of Ermelo High School.
- (g) The struggle for the maintenance of mother tongue education, and efforts to curtail the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction.
- (h) The failure of Outcomes Based Education (OBE); the 'inventor' of OBE himself, William Spady, stated that the system has not worked in South Africa.
- (i) The problems associated with assessment; so much time is being spent on it that not much instructional time is available.
- (j) Too much emphasis is placed on skills, to the detriment of transferring content.
- (k) Educators are not being adequately trained for their tasks.

Cognisance was also taken of important statistical data:

- (a) There are currently approximately 11 million orphaned children worldwide, and this number is expected to increase to some 40 million by 2020.
- (b) By 2020, South Africa alone will have to cope with approximately 2 million orphans.
- (c) Many schools suffer from the chaos caused by countrywide educator strikes.
- (d) Because of lost instruction time, the burning down of schools, the shortages of teachers (including those with inadequate qualifications), problems are experienced annually with the final examinations.

- (e) The results are constantly deteriorating, and mention has been made of the importation of educators from other (including Oriental) countries for teaching the so-called scarce subjects.
- (f) The acceptance of the Children's Act has implications for future covenant education in that certain forms of Biblical parental punishment is seen as inadmissible.

Decision: Points 6.1 and 6.1.1 noted.

6.1.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

The following seem to be the most important new developments in education during the past three years, and which have to be constantly monitored:

- (a) The restructuring of the public schools to become instruments of (life-view?) change, possibly to such an extent that it might eventually be untenable for Christian parents to send their children to those schools.
- (b) The 'content' of the curriculum is such that it is no longer acceptable – inter alia because of the inclusion of evolutionism as a theme.
- (c) The quality and the training of the educators can be questioned.
- (d) Christian parents and teachers face serious challenges with regard to order and discipline.
- (e) Educator strikes, the general lack of order and discipline, increasing substance abuse, a largely laissez faire attitude in the public schools all seem to make these schools less desirable for Christian children to attend.
- (f) There is a clear tendency to enforce the character of the 'new democracy' in the schools and in all situations, including in staff and class rooms. 'Social cohesion', the current Minister's slogan, is being forced on the schools through policy and legislation.
- (g) Developments concerning the new Children's Act should be monitored. The new Act should be analysed, and guidance be given to covenantal parents with regards to its stipulations.
- (h) Attention should be given to the maintenance of academic and moral standards at tertiary education level, also with respect to teacher education.

Decision: Approved.

7. Conversation and cooperation with the Deputies for Catechism and the Deputies for Youth

The Chairperson of the Deputies for Christian Education met on a regular basis with the chairpersons of the Deputies for Youth and for Catechism. Since these meetings were merely for coordination purposes, and not based on a specific brief to the Deputies, no detailed report can be given. It can only be mentioned that activities were coordinated in order to avoid duplication of programmes for the youth as well as unilateral actions that would affect the work of the other Deputies.

Decision: Noted.

7.1 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

This conversation and cooperation should be continued.

Decision: Approved with the following assignment: The deputies have frequent contact as needed with the Deputies for Catechism as well as the Deputies for Youth Care and *Kruispad* for the sake of coordination, supporting activities and the handling of communal matters.

8. The Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

8.1 *General*

The value driven way of practising science and scholarship at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU still provides sufficient cause for the Deputies for CE to continue with their liaison with the NWU.

8.1.1 Execution of the brief

As in the past, discussions were held during March and April 2008 with the Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, dr Theuns Eloff, the Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, prof Annette Combrink, prof Pieter Potgieter (Director of the School of Philosophy) and Prof Ben de Klerk (Rector of the Theological Seminary) about the role and contribution of the Deputies for CE in promoting the Christian-reformational character of the University.

Decision: Noted.

8.2 *Discharge of RCSA Synodal brief of 2006*

8.2.1 Brief 1

To analyse the new Statutes, vision and mission of the NWU in order to advise the churches, the members of congregations and prospective students with respect to the scope still provided by the Statutes, the vision and the mission for promoting the Christian-reformational character of especially the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, and to encourage Reformed parents to enrol their children as students at the Potchefstroom Campus (Acta 2006:356, 8.3).

8.2.1.1 Execution of the brief

8.2.1.1.1 The current state of affairs concerning the transformation processes and the character of the NWU.

- (a) The adapted Statutes were accepted by the Minister.
- (b) The other two campuses accepted the fact that each campus can possess its own character. The possibility exists therefore for persisting with the value-drivenness of the Potchefstroom Campus.
- (c) Progress with the creation of a distinctive character for the Potchefstroom Campus:
 - (i) Philosophical education instead of life-conceptual education of the students has become one of the cornerstones of the Campus.
 - (j) Reflection on the philosophical aspects of all the scientific disciplines affords a platform to help students to adopt Christian values. This approach is one of the four strategic aims of the University; the School of Philosophy takes the initiative in this enterprise.
- (d) Contact with spiritually like-minded institutions such as Calvin College and Dordt College in the USA, Redeemer College in Canada, Daystar in Kenya and Kosin in Korea, as well as the Driestar-Educatief in the Netherlands continues unabatedly.
- (e) The University also continues with its participation in IAPCHE (International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education) and with its liaison with the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. The next international conference of the IAPCHE will DV be held at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU in September 2008.
- (f) The Pro Reformanda Trust is utilised for financing research on values.
- (g) Newly appointed lecturers are inducted in Philosophy of Science and Scholarship by means of an induction course.

8.2.1.1.2 The students

- (a) The students enrolled at the Potchefstroom Campus feel strongly about their Christian convictions and they also live according to them.
- (b) The formal student life is still being explicitly conducted according to Christian convictions.
- (c) The fact that around 3 000 students have been enrolling annually for the past few years at the Potchefstroom Campus is an unmistakable motion of confidence in the offerings of the Campus and the approaches that are being followed.

8.2.1.1.3 Publications

- (a) The journals 'In die Skriflig', 'Koers' as well as 'Word and Deed' are still being published.

- (b) A working document entitled 'Christian foundation, content and meaning' is still accessible on the website of the Potchefstroom Campus.

8.2.1.1.4 Report on the value-drivenness of the Potchefstroom Campus.

In reaction to a request by the Reformed Church Lyttelton, a presentation was made at that church community on the value-drivenness of the Potchefstroom Campus. The presentation was subsequently transformed into a report that has already been circulated among all the church communities of the Reformed Church.

8.2.1.1.5 New module

A proposal has recently been made to the Senate that a module 'Understanding the World' be taught at all the campuses of the NWU, a course that would explain the integratedness of faith and science / scholarship. The project is conducted under the auspices of the School of Philosophy.

Decision: Points 8.2.1 to 8.2.1.1.5 noted.

8.2.1.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

- (a) The to-be-appointed Deputies, in consultation with the Senate of the TSP and the Curators, ascertain in formal discussions with the NWU what the content, meaning and implication of concepts such as "value driven", "value drivenness" and "values" are.
- (b) The Deputies have continuous discussions with the representatives of the NWU, the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU, TSP, School for Philosophy, student life of the Potchefstroom campus and other relevant persons regarding the promotion of the Christian reformed life and world view on the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU.
- (c) That note is taken with gratitude of the appreciation there is for the role the Theological School in Potchefstroom plays at the Potchefstroom Campus.
- (d) The Deputies campaign together with like-minded organisations such as the VCHO and AROS for the establishment of a chair for Reformed Philosophy at the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU. In this pursuit the Deputies pay attention to the possibility to give financial support from the GKSA to the NWU in order to establish such a professorship.
- (e) The Deputies should send letters to Church Councils annually in which covenant parents are encouraged to let their children study at the PUK campus, NWU in order to help ensure that Reformed values are maintained and strengthened. With that the possibility of the PUK Campus' distance programs should also be considered.
- (f) That the University should be made aware that the annual leaders conference (at the end of each year) with the newly elected student leaders offers a valuable opportunity to address the value-drivenness of the university and to consider the edification of this pursuit.
- (g) That Church Councils be made aware that they should not take up matters that touch on the relationship between the churches and the NWU directly with university authorities, but that they should as far as possible address such matters through the CE deputies of the GKSA.
- (h) The Deputies CE make an effort to get support from Church Councils, the TSP and Curators, and the Faculty of Theology for the urgent need to let the Christian Reformed life and world view take effect on the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU and to edify it. This should also occur on the other campuses, and it should be communicated to the representatives of the NWU.
- (i) Based on the result of the enquiry 8.2.1.2 [a] above, the Deputies revises the matter of a letter to Reformed parents that encourages them to send their children to the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU to study with the aim that Reformed values be strengthened there.

Decision: Approved as amended – changes already included – Deputies Acta.

8.2.2 Brief 2

To maintain the historical bonds between the NWU and the Reformed Churches (Acta 1994:403) by requesting the Regional Synods to invite the Potchefstroom Campus to address them and disseminate information (Acta 2006:361, 8.3).

8.2.2.1 Matters arising from the conversations with the managers of the NWU

- (a) The Vice-Chancellor, dr Theuns Eloff, and the Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, prof Annette Combrink, committed themselves to making information available to the Professors of Theology for dissemination at Regional Synods.
- (b) Prof Ben de Klerk, Rector of the Theological Seminary, confirmed the Seminary's participation in this project. He promised that the Seminary will attend to the interests of the NWU when the Seminary Professors address the respective Regional Synods as well as during their 'sermon visits' to congregations.
- (c) Prof de Klerk has also confirmed that the new dispensation at the NWU has in no way affected the programmes of the Theological Seminary.
- (d) The Vice-Chancellor, dr Theuns Eloff, and the Campus Rector, prof Annette Combrink, attend Curator meetings on invitation.

Decision: Noted.

8.2.2.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

- (a) That the Rector of the TSP be requested to ensure that relevant information about the NWU and the Potchefstroom Campus is conveyed annually by the Professors to the different Regional Synods.
- (b) That the Professors in Theology also disseminate information about the NWU and the Potchefstroom campus to the individual ministers during their bi-annual 'sermon weekend visits'.
- (c) That the Theological Professors continue with the practice of, in accordance with Church Order article 21, informing the students about the responsibilities of covenantal parents with respect to the education of our children of the covenant
- (d) That the practice be continued of extending invitations to the Vice-Chancellor of the NWU and the Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus to address the Synod.

Decision: Approved.

8.2.3 Brief 3

To request the Deputies for CE, in the interest of extending their aim of supporting value-driven scholarship, to broaden their vision so as not only to include the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU in their strategy but rather the entire higher education sector. The purpose of their continued participation in the transformation processes at the Potchefstroom Campus should be aimed at ensuring that the Christian-reformational character of that Campus does not become compromised by that process (Acta 2006: 361, 8.3).

8.2.3.1 Execution of the brief

- (a) The Institutional Forum (IF) was instituted to serve as a consultative body for advising the University Council about certain policy matters. Prof Marius Stander currently represents the Convocation on the IF.
- (b) The composition of the NWU's Convocation was finalised on the basis of a new constitution after the Statutes had been signed off by the Minister of Education.
- (c) All four of the representatives of the Convocation in the University Council are currently alumni of the Puk.

Decision: Noted.

8.2.3.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

- (a) Ministers and members of the RCSA should be constantly encouraged to become members of the Convocation in order to be in a position to make

contributions that would ensure the retention of the unique character of the Potchefstroom Campus.

- (b) That a letter be addressed annually to Church Councils and Regional Synods in which ministers and members of congregations are encouraged to become members of the Convocation of the NWU.
- (c) That the Professors of the Theological Seminary continue with the practice of encouraging theology students to become members of the Convocation of the NWU.

Decision: Approved.

8.2.4 Brief 4

To enlist the firm and joyful support of members of churches, church councils, the Faculty of Theology, the Curatorium, the Theological Seminary and other interested parties for the promotion of the reformational character of the Potchefstroom Campus, and to introduce it to representatives of that Campus (Acta 2006:359, 8.2.4).

8.2.4.1 To take note of

The Potchefstroom Campus appointed Dr Douw Breed as member of the University Council in terms of its mandate to appoint a community leader.

Decision: Noted.

8.2.5 Brief 5

To promote reformational education not only at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU but in all walks of life (Acta 2006: 360, 8.2.5).

Decision: Noted.

8.2.5.1 Execution of the brief

The Deputies CE promotes reformed education, not only at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, but also in all areas of life in society as well as at other educational institutions.

Decision: Approved as amended.

8.2.6 Brief 6

To attend to the provision of scholarships / bursaries to education students as well as to alternative training modi such as distance education per satellite and other possibilities (Acta 2006:360, 8.2.6).

8.2.6.1 Execution of the brief

- (a) The Pro Ecclesia Scholarship Fund for supporting prospective education students has increased to R373 122.00 during March 2008 through contributions by church communities; church members should be encouraged to continue contributing to the fund.
- (b) According to the Rules of the Fund, only the interest accrued can be granted as loans to students. 13 students have so far received loans from the Fund.

Decision: Noted.

8.2.6.2 Matters about which Synod has to take resolutions

- (a) The name of the fund, which only grants loans, is changed to the Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund.
- (b) The availability of the NWU's long distance programs should still be brought to the attention of members in far-off areas by means of small notices by each Faculty of the Potchefstroom Campus in *Die Kerkblad*.
- (c) The editorial board of *Die Kerkblad* is requested to approach the different deans at the Potchefstroom Campus to give the university the opportunity to explain how value-drivenness is integrated and promoted in the different subject groups by means of a continuous article series.
- (d) Church Councils encourage children to study teaching at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU and accredited institutions, especially AROS, and that financial assistance be made available through the Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund.

- (e) That one annual collection continues (up until the next General Synod in 2012) in order to strengthen the Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund.
- (f) All Classes and Regional Synods are requested to contribute an amount per year (up until the next General Synod in DV 2012) to strengthen the Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund.
- (g) The Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund should be brought to the attention of Church Councils and members by means of frequent correspondence from the Administrative Buro. Church Councils should be encouraged to make contributions to this important matter.
- (h) The Deputies request deaconates of the GKSA to, in light of CO, art 21, assist students/children who do not have the necessary financial means to study teaching at the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU or at AROS or another accredited institution.
- (i) Church Councils should encourage children in the congregations (who have the necessary gifts) to study teaching, since there is still a shortage of well-trained Christian teachers, and an even larger shortage will develop in the near future.
- (j) Students from Aros also qualify for support from the Pro Ecclesia Study Loan Fund.

Decision: Approved as amended.

8.2.7 The Proposed Brief of the 2009 Synod to the CE sub-commission for the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU

- 8.2.7.1 Assignment 1: To advise churches, members and intending students regarding the room in the Statute, vision and mission of the NWU for the promotion of a Christian Reformed Character at especially the Potchefstroom Campus, and to encourage reformed parents to send their children to the Potchefstroom Campus for further study.
- 8.2.7.2 Assignment 2: The Deputies should focus on the historical bond between the GKSA and the NWU. In this process the mutual exchange of correct information between the churches and the university, for instance during Regional Synods, is important. This includes information on the availability of distance learning programs offered by the NWU, as well as information from the side of the deans of the NWU, for instance by means of articles in journals.
- 8.2.7.3 Assignment 3: The CE deputies should not only focus on the promotion of the Christian-reformed life and world view on the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, but also more broadly on the entire education sector.
- 8.2.7.4 Assignment 4: To gain the firm and cheerful support of members, Church Councils, the Faculty of Theology, the Curatorium, the theological school and other parties for the value-driven character of the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, and to offer this support to the representatives of that Campus.
- 8.2.7.5 Assignment 5: The Deputies CE pay continuous attention to the question of how and where intending education students can find financial support for their studies, with the aim of carrying out the Christian-reformed principles onto the terrain of teaching.
- 8.2.7.5.1 Deputies pay attention to getting information regarding the use of alternative teaching technologies (for instance per satellite) and to communicating such information.

Decision: Approved as amended.

8.2.8 Other assignments to the CE Deputies as proposed to Synod 2009

- 8.2.8.1 That the Deputies Christian Education should maintain a website by means of funds made available for this purpose.
- 8.2.8.2 That the to-be-appointed Deputies, in light of the above, publish all previously unpublished and all new documents that may appear after the Synod on the webpage, and that they inform churches of the new information available.
- 8.2.8.3 That the to-be-appointed Deputies will take note of the work that local churches have done to establish webpages.

- 8.2.8.4 Parents and Church Councils should be reminded that they have an even greater task than in the past with regard to the religious education of their children given the fact that religious instruction in schools has been reduced to the absolute minimum.
- 8.2.8.5 A person/persons should be appointed to the Deputy group to liaise with the different institutions involved with independent Christian education/home schooling, for instance VCHO, ARSO, ARTO, BCVO. Church councils are requested to recommend the books of ARSO to schools in their community.
- 8.2.8.6 Church Councils are requested to support and promote the establishment and maintenance of independent Reformed Schools in word and deed.
- 8.2.8.7 That Church Councils are encouraged to invite institutions involved with Reformed education/home schooling to present themselves to Church Councils.
- 8.2.8.8 Church Councils are requested to have one compulsory annual collection for the development of ARSO lesson material.
- 8.2.8.9 Take note of tendencies in the curricula and teaching in general. Developments in education should be monitored and where applicable Christian reformed testimony should be offered. Church councils, parents and teachers should be advised in this regard.
- 8.2.8.10 Monitor available textbooks in the education sector and inform Church Councils and parents regarding the usefulness of the lesson material.
- 8.2.8.11 To make contact with members in neighbouring countries and to monitor education there in order to also expose members there to the developments regarding Christian education. Liaison with Zambia should take place through the Gereformeerde Kerk Koedoesrand.
- 8.2.8.12 Discussion and cooperation with the deputies for Catechism and Deputies for Youth is continued.
- 8.2.8.13 The creation of a databasis/ mailing list with the names and addresses of reformed teachers/members (national and international) involved in education for use during the organisation of seminars (see 5.1.4, 5.3.3 and 5.3.4), but also for communicating support material regarding Reformed education, included content. Church Councils should be requested to assist the Deputies CE with the creation of this mailing list. ARSO will administrate this information.
- 8.2.8.14 Given the letter of encouragement from the CE deputies to Reformed parents to let their children study at the Puk Campus of the NWU, Synod is requested to appoint Deputies to discuss the value-drivenness and related matters with the management of the University.
- 8.2.8.15 Deputies make contact with Christian educators working in public schools to offer support to them in the difficult situation. Attention should be paid to factors hindering the expression of their reformed calling and the question of how they could still fulfil this calling within the current circumstances.
- 8.2.8.16 The Deputies identify the urgent critical areas (for instance evolution, multi-religions, etc) with the aim of offering existing simple, clear and concrete guides/information pieces dealing with these subjects to parents, elders, ministers or whoever might need it.
- 8.2.8.17 The Deputies for Ecumenical Matters will support the Deputies CE with regard to liaison with persons/institutions abroad. The Deputies CE will also make study material available through the Deputies Ecumenical Matters to Reformed persons and other interested parties abroad (see 5.1.2).
- 8.2.8.18 The Deputies encourage all Reformed members to pray for covenant parents and children (see 5.1.3).
- 8.2.8.19 The Deputies CE, in collaboration with for instance ARSO and other Reformed education institutions, should offer a seminar and/or seminars in different regions/centra for Christian teachers in an affordable manner. Christian teachers from abroad should also be involved with the seminars. Themes for such seminars should be determined by the different roleplayers (see 5.1.4).

- 8.2.8.20 The Deputies CE should stay informed of tendencies and events in education in general in order to, with reference to CO, art 21 especially, support and advise parents, Church Councils and Reformed teachers in both public and independent schools, as well as those involved in home schooling and tertiary education. This means that new legislation (including the Children's Law) and any other policy document concerned with education should be evaluated so that the GKSA can act in the interest of Reformed education.
- 8.2.8.21 The unique nature of the Christian faith and religion should still be witnessed in word and deed. Parents and teachers are encouraged in this regard, also by participating in the activities of Reformed or Christian parent and/or teachers societies.
- 8.2.8.22 Deputies pay attention to the possibility of using Reformed subject teachers to act advisory or even correctively within Classes or at neighbouring congregations. The aim is to support children and parents with regard to the question of what the Bible says regarding certain matters. ARSO can also be of assistance in this regard.
- 8.2.8.23 Deputies for Christian Education should be appointed again with the assignments as included in this Report.

Decision: Points 8.2.8.1 to 8.2.8.23 are approved as amended. Changes are already included.