

19.5 REPORT 4: DEPUTIES CHRISTIAN EDUCATION – CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT 2012-2015 (Art 140)

- A. Dr DJ de Kock tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.

C. REPORT

1. Mandate

The Acta of Synod 2012:228-229 contained no assignment regarding this.

Decision: Noted.

2. Matters that the Synod take note of

2.1 *Some general trends*

Although the authorities have undertaken various steps to address the extensive deficiencies in the sphere of primary and secondary education, not much has changed. The policy of outcome-based education of the National Department of education was abandoned and in its place content and prescribed themes in the curriculum again play an important role. It has the disadvantage that teachers' freedom of movement within the prescribed curriculum is further reduced. That still leaves a lot of room for education to be offered from a Reformative perspective.

2.1.1 The new curriculum amongst others resulted in Arso/Aros, who in the past decade has done a lot to develop school books with a reformative content, could continue to build upon it. Much work had to be done to keep the content of school textbooks both reformative and within the legal requirements.

2.1.2 However, there are still many public and private schools with room for the Bible to be heard. Often principals or teachers want to advance this and in many cases it is also done with great success. But from many visits it is clear that these schools and staff require equipping and of course receive no guidance (or manuals) from the authorities in this regard. The ideal would be to unite all Christian teachers who are working in public schools into an organization where they can be supported effectively, specifically where the compilation of a Christian curriculum is concerned.

2.2 *Encouraging activities*

The Bible teaches us not to despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10, Haggai 2:3). Therefore, the deputies are grateful to be able to show:

2.2.1 The development of Reformed school books (currently totalling more than 130) covers nearly the entire primary school curriculum. Where high schools are concerned, some subjects such as Biblical Studies and Life Orientation has already been completed and plans are in place for addressing the other subject areas. A number of books are already available in English. The development of this curriculum and school books has been slightly delayed because the curriculum was changed by the authorities, but Aros is working hard to also continue with the rollout of a Reformed high school curriculum.

2.2.2 All these school books are available in hard copy at Aros's bookstore, Boekenhout-Folmer, and can also be downloaded from the website Christian Media for free, and are being used amongst others by homeschoolers and teachers in public schools.

2.2.3 In addition to all the school textbooks, different courses for children, parents and teachers have been developed. Here we can mention the following:

2.2.3.1 CNO course: *Boustene vir Christelik normatiewe skoolonderwys* (also in English as *Building blocks for Christian normative education*) is a course that has been completed by more than 1 000 teachers nationwide. Many public schools, like Hoërskool Diamantveld in Kimberley, have enrolled their entire staff for the course.

- 2.2.3.2 *Studeer sonder sukkel*, a course to teach children how to study (also available in English as *Sam's study success*) has been completed by literally thousands of students nationwide. High schools such as Afrikaans Hoër, Elarduspark, Swartkop, HS Ermelo and Eduplex all requested Aros to come and present the course at their schools.
- 2.2.3.3 *In U Hande*, a multimedia Bible Guide for grades 0-7 (DVD, workbooks and manuals) is already being used by many schools (including public schools) for the presentation of Bible Education in schools. Aros is grateful that some public schools that have already phased out Bible Education as school subject, have now implemented the subject again.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.2.3.3 noted.

3. Matters that the Synod decide on

Recommendations

- 3.1 Following the necessity to reflect upon Christian education in South Africa, the Deputies are requested to arrange a congress with other interested organizations and churches such as the NG, NH and AP churches. Such a congress should reflect upon the state of affairs regarding Christian education in the broad.
- 3.2 The Synod will be asked to continue with the decision that congregations be requested to collect so that ARSO can proceed with the development of a Christian curriculum for use in public and private schools.
- 3.3 Church Councils are requested to, in the light of amongst others CO, art 21 and Sunday 38, Heidelberg Catechism, give attention to education (in particular the curriculum followed by children of the covenant).

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.3 approved.