

24.7 POINT OF DESCRIPTION: GK PRETORIA-ANLIN : TRAINING AT MUKHANYO THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE (Artt 161, 179, 181)

- A. The chairperson, dr DG Breed, welcomes dr B de Vries from Mukhanyo Theological College in the meeting.
- B. The chairperson, dr DG Breed, hands the chair to the deputy-chairperson, rev SD Snyman.
- C. Dr HM Zwemstra tables the Point of Description.
- D. Point of Description 24.7 in Agenda are replaced with Point of Description 24.8 in the Supplementary Agenda (with reference 24.7).
- E. The Point of Description will be concluded during the Synod session.

F. POINT OF DESCRIPTION

1. Point of Description

We humbly request the General Synod to recognise the BTh and Honours degrees of Mukhanyo Theological College (MTC) as credible and adequate for admission to the MDiv required by the GKSA, based on the focus and in-service training programmes offered by this college.

We furthermore request the development of a MDiv curriculum that will be centred on the circumstances and requirements of the churches that are served by students through in-service training programmes and that lecturers of the MTC receive official recognition to facilitate the training.

We recommend that the Synod appoint deputies/delegates to approve MTC's in-service training programmes and take the necessary steps to supervise the training of GKSA students.

2. Motivations

- 2.1 *Although there are many potential students who are indeed blessed with the gifts to minister in die GKSA, they are unable to participate in full-time live-in programmes for the following reasons:*
 - 2.1.1 Many elders and lay leaders serve as full-time church workers in young churches in rural areas and townships aiding in pastoral care, missionary work and evangelisation. They depend on the honorarium the churches pay them to support their families. They cannot undertake full-time live-in theological studies, because they would then have no means to support their families and would also have to take their children out of local schools.
 - 2.1.2 New churches, recently planted, or small congregations who cannot afford the services of full-time ministers cannot do without the services of their elders and workers at this stage, given the difficulty new and small churches have in identifying gifted men that could be trained to replace these church workers that serve as elders and lay preachers to lead congregations and services at the various preaching posts.
 - 2.1.3 In many townships and rural areas churches and communities are poverty stricken and have very limited resources to support their church leaders. Yet there are brothers who have the gift for ministering the Gospel, who would not be in a position to leave the churches they serve and move to Potchefstroom for full-time live-in study.
- 2.2 *The in-service training of MTC would be of great benefit to the GKSA.*
 - 2.2.1 In-service training is urgently needed, because so many potential theological students don't possess the opportunity or financial means for full-time study. This kind of training would provide the GKSA with so many more qualified and properly educated ministers.
 - 2.2.2 MTC's in-service training programmes are designed to train students part of the week that they may attend to their Gospel ministry the rest of the week and over weekends.

- 2.2.3 In-service training offers students the opportunity to receive theoretical instruction whilst applying it simultaneously in the field, supervised by local Church Councils and a few ordained ministers from the local Classis.
- 2.2.4 MTC's in-service training requires an additional study year to enable both academic study and practical experience. Graduates, therefore, receive both years of practical experience in the study field and also work-integrated learning in preaching, teaching and practical evangelisation and pastoral counselling that they may be fully trained and qualified upon graduation to serve the churches as properly ordained minister.
- 2.2.5 Distance learning may well be of benefit, but in-service training is of greater value in that it offers a classroom experience for academic and spiritual assistance.
- 2.3 *Many potential theological students first need lower-level programmes (bridging courses), to prepare them for study at undergraduate and post-graduate level.*
- 2.3.1 The GKSA urgently needs more ministers. There is a tremendous lack of professionally trained ministers that are equipped for local Gospel ministry and to serve in local churches. Yet many spiritually gifted aspiring students do not meet the requisite admission standards.
- 2.3.2 Admission requirements for undergraduate study are just too high for these potential students (for a variety of reasons, like coming from previously disadvantaged communities or an education system that is impeded by a lack of adequate resources).
- 2.3.3 MTC presents a number of lower-level training programmes in aid of potential students who don't meet undergraduate admission requirements. These programmes are designed to provide a Biblical framework for their current Gospel ministry and also prepare them for study at undergraduate level.
- 2.3.4 MTC has been educating students in this way for twenty years and many MTC-students – who started out on this lower level – have now completed their BTh and BTh honours and have been accepted for masters study programmes.
- 2.4 *MTC is Biblical and Reformed through and through.*
- 2.4.1 All MTC lecturers profess the historical Reformed Confessions and have openly vowed to never teach anything that is in conflict with these Confessions.
- 2.4.2 All MTC lecturers that teach at BTh and honours level are required to at least possess a masters and many also have a PhD.
- 2.4.3 MTC has requested the GKSA's involvement to ensure that the training remains true to Scripture and the Reformed Confessions of faith.
- 2.4.4 MTC is blessed with highly qualified Reformed academics and foreign missionaries who annually present modules as guest lecturers that ensures an international standard of quality Reformed theological education, without any cost to the GKSA.
- 2.5 *MTC is a fully registered and accredited academic institution in South Africa.*
- 2.5.1 MTC is properly registered at the Department of Higher Education and Training, in accordance to the Act on Higher Education of 1997, as private higher education institution (registration certificate number: 2009/HE08/002).
- 2.5.2 MTC's diploma, BTh and honours degrees are fully accredited by the Council for Higher Education (CHE, HEQF, SAQA).
- 2.5.3 MTC's undergraduate qualifications – BTh (NQF level 7) and honours (NQF level 8) are of the same academic standard as those of the NWU or any other university in South Africa. The qualifications MTC offer are recognised and accepted by all other academic institutions in Africa.
- 2.5.4 Students at MTC receive internationally recognised diplomas and degrees that will open doors to further study, if they so wish.

- 2.6 *MTC has been offering contextual theological training for twenty years and is completely devoted to delivering ministers for Gospel ministry in typically African environments.*
- 2.6.1 The need for contextualisation in the training of clergy is recognised worldwide and an increasing number of education institutions in Africa have come to realise that the age-old European academic content no longer suffices for the preparation of church leaders in Africa.
- 2.6.2 MTC has engaged more than 30 experts in theological education, in Southern Africa, to develop the accredited curricula for BTh and honours (please see attached conceptual overview of MTC's curricula in Appendix A and B).
- 2.6.3 The outcome the MTC curricula is designed to achieve is that of a "man of God in Africa" profile. The detailed outcomes profile is available upon request.
- 2.6.4 MTC's curricula provide students with the necessary tools to interpret Scripture (Bible languages and theology), to apply Reformed dogma within Gospel ministry contexts, to serve local churches and to lead local church-based Gospel ministries.
- 2.6.5 This curricula is flexible and include a number of additional electives for students who would like further study in Greek and Hebrew, church planting, etc.
- 2.6.6 MTC's BTh degree requires a minimum of two years of Greek and Hebrew, also providing for students who may take the Bible languages for four years (the additional Greek and Hebrew could be made compulsory for all GKSA students, should churches consider it necessary).
- 2.7 *MTC's philosophy on education is missionary in nature.*
- 2.7.1 MTC's programme aims to prepare students for Gospel ministry in local churches: i.e. preaching, church leadership, counselling, church planting, etc.
- 2.7.2 MTC's diploma and BTh lay the Biblical and Reformed groundwork, together with instruction in an increasing number of professional skills (academic literacy, Bible languages, etc.) and the tools for research throughout the curricula.
- 2.7.3 This college is fully funded by study fees and donations from both local and international Reformed churches, which means that the institution is not subject to pressure from external and unreformed doctrines.
- 2.7.4 MTC's missionary model provides quality Reformed education at a much lower cost, than those churches that have to support their theological students.
- 2.8 *The GKSA must strive for unity in dogma amongst professionally trained ministers, but not uniformity in training programmes. One educational method does not suffice and cannot meet the needs of all churches and Gospel ministering contexts.*
- 2.8.1 Correspondence/uniformity in theological education does not mean homogeneity or the obsolete demand that all students must study in one place within one institution.
- 2.8.2 The GKSA will greatly benefit from a variety of theological training.
- 2.8.3 Many Reformed denominations, within the international community, have moved to a decentralised model of theological education and now reap the rich rewards.
- 2.8.4 The diverse needs and contexts of the different churches and background of students are on the increase, which deepens the need for a variety of methods.
- 2.9 *Many of the ministers currently serving within the GKSA studied at MTC.*
- 2.9.1 The precedent has already been set for recognising MTC graduates.
- 2.9.2 The formal Synod Midlands 1997 (art 18.8) deemed training at MTC as sufficient for ministering the Gospel and accepted such students for examination.

2.9.3 Regional Synod Pretoria recently admitted candidates who studied at MTC to the profession.

2.10 The General Synod has already recognised the need for in-service training in theology within the given context, described above, which a campus-driven domestic training programme cannot adequately meet. This Point of discussion is in correspondence to and expand on decisions made by the Synod in Potchefstroom over the past twenty years (cf. *inter alia* Synod Acta 1994:699, 5.2; Acta 2006 2.3.7).

3. Request

We, the undersigned churches, are of the conviction that this kind of training will fill a great need within our churches, will be a valuable tool towards the expansion of the Kingdom of God, contribute to the planting and establishing of more Reformed Churches (especially in rural and previously disadvantaged areas) and as such strengthen our Reformed testimony in Southern Africa where there is an urgent need for the Reformed proclaiming of the Gospel.

We humbly urge the General Synod to seriously and prayerfully consider this plea that will to the glory of God, place more ordained ministers in rural areas, townships and small churches; build churches; and offer students from Reformed Churches the opportunity to complete their training as ministers in the churches of the GKSA at MTC.

Appendix A: Conceptual Overview of the Mukhanyo BTh programme

BTh Year One

B.Th.	50	Semester 1			B.Th.	50	Semester 2		
Y/L	Cr	Code		Y/L	Cr	Code			
1/5	15	AL1	Academic Literacy 1	1/6	15	AL2	Academic Literacy 2		
1/5	5	HE1	Hebrew Introduction	1/5	5	GR1	Greek Introduction		
1/6	10	HE2	Hebrew Tools 1	1/6	10	GR2	Greek Tools 1		
1/6	10	BT1	Bible Story 1	1/6	10	BT2	Bible Story 2		
1/5	10	ST1	Introduction to Theology	1/5	10	PT1	Intro to Pastoral Ministry		

BTh Year Two

B.Th.	50	Semester 1			B.Th.	50	Semester 2		
Y/L	Cr	Code		Y/L	Cr	Code			
2/6	10	HE3	Hebrew Tools 2	2/6	10	OT2	Historical Books		
2/6	10	GR3	Greek Tools 2	2/6	10	CH1	Early Church History		
2/6	10	OT1	Pentateuch	2/6	10	ST3	Christian Doctrine 1		
2/6	10	NT1	Gospels Literature	2/6	5	PT4	Christian Leadership		
2/6	10	PT2	Introduction Preaching	2/6	5	PT5	Teaching in the Church		
				2/6	10	MI1	Biblical Missions		

Additional Electives:				Additional Electives:			
2/6	5	ST2	Reformed Confessions	2/6	5	HE4	Hebrew Reading 1
2/6	5	PT3	Christian Education	2/6	5	GR4	Greek Reading 1
				2/6	2	PP1	Practice Preaching 1

BTh Year Three

B.Th.	50	B.Th.	45
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Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 1	Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 2
3/7	15	NT2	Paul's Letters	3/7	15	OT3	Prophetic Books
3/6	15	ST4	Christian Doctrine 2	3/6	10	CH2	Church Hist Reformation
3/7	10	PM1	Ministry Practicum 1	3/7	10	ST5	Christian Doctrine 3
3/7	10	MI2	Missionary Churches	3/7	10	PT7	Pastoral Counselling 1
Additional Electives:				Additional Electives:			
3/7	5	HE5	Hebrew Reading 2	3/7	5	GR5	Greek Reading 2
3/6	2	PP2	Practice Preaching 2	3/6	2	PP3	Practice Preaching 3
3/7	10	PT6	Teaching Practicum	3/6	5	PT8	Mercy Ministries

BTh Year Four

B.Th.	50			B.Th.	45		
Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 1	Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 2
4/7	10	NT3	Acts & Revelation	4/7	10	OT4	Wisdom Literature
4/7	10	ST6	Christian Ethics	4/7	10	NT4	General Letters
4/6	10	CH3	Modern Ch. & Mission Hist	4/7	10	PT9	Pastoral Counselling 2
4/7	10	CH4	Church Order & Worship	4/7	15	MI3	Missional Apologetics
4/7	10	PM2	Ministry Practicum 2				
Additional Electives:				Additional Electives:			
4/7	5	HE6	Hebrew Reading 3	4/7	5	GR6	Greek Reading 3
4/7	10	ST7	Reformed Spirituality	4/7	10	ST8	Christian Philosophy
4/6	2	PP4	Practice Preaching 4	4/6	2	PP5	Practice Preaching 5

Appendix B: Conceptual Overview of the Mukhanyo Honours programme

BTh Honours

Y/L	60			Y/L	60		
Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 1	Y/L	Cr	Code	Semester 2
1/8	10	OT41	Study of Isaiah	1/8	10	PT42	Preaching Christ in Africa
1/8	10	BT41	Biblical Theology	1/8	10	NT41	Study of James
1/8	10	ST41	Missionary Ethics for Discipleship	1/8	10	BT42	Apocalyptic
1/8	10	PT41	Practicum Ministry: Focus Area	1/8	10	ST42	Pneumatology
1/8	10	EL41	Historical Theology in Africa or Reading Historical Documents: Ref & Post-Ref	1/8	10	RE42	Research Methodology 2: Planning a Research Project
1/8	10	RE41	Research Methodology 1: Introduction	1/8	10	RE43	Research Methodology: Writing an Academic Paper
Additional Electives:				Additional Electives:			
1/8	10	HE41	Hebrew 1	1/8	10	HE42	Hebrew 2
1/8	10	GR41	Greek 1	1/8	10	GR42	Greek 2
1/8	10	EL42	Reading Historical Documents: Reformation and Post-Reformation	1/8	10	EL43	Introduction to the study of Jonathan Edwards

Decision: The Point of Description is not given effect to.