RAPPORT AAN KERKE – REPORT TO CHURCHES

1 AGTERGROND

In die geskiedenis sal 2020 as die COVID-19-jaar bekendstaan. Die verspreiding van die virus, die gevolglike gesondheids-, sosiale en ekonomiese impak en veral ons as mense se reaksie op die pandemie, het weer gewys hoe belangrik die evangelie van Jesus Christus vir ons wêreld is. Dit is hoekom dit 'n groot voorreg was om op 21 Julie as Kuratore van die Teologiese Skool Potchefstroom virtueel te vergader om aandag te gee aan die opleiding van ons broers wat toegerus word om bedienaars van die Woord van ons Here te wees in die situasie waarin ons leef.

As Christene het ons – in lyn met Efesiërs 1 – die voorreg om in hierdie tyd te leef voor die God van ons Here Jesus Christus, die Vader aan wie die heerlikheid behoort, Hy wat sy Gees van wysheid en openbaring aan ons gee. Ons lewe in die hande van ons Here Jesus Christus wat bo alles verhef en aangestel is as Hoof van die kerk. In Hom ervaar ons die vrede en genade van ons Here en God en die onvergelykbare kragtige werking van sy Gees.

2 KURATORE

Die kuratore word deur die onderskeie Streeksinodes aangewys vir 'n tydperk van drie jaar. Met die besluit om die Algemene Sinode van Januarie 2021 na Januarie 2022 uit te stel, is die dienstyd van die kuratore ook tot Januarie 2022 verleng. 'n Nuwe voorsitter is aangewys aangesien ds. Piet Venter die kuratore versoek het om van sy verantwoordelikhede onthef te word. Ons waardeer die enorme werk wat hy gedoen het en veral die wyse waarop hy deursigtigheid in die werk van die kuratore bevorder het. Dr. Gerard Meijer (Gereformeerde Kerk Oos-Moot) is as die nuwe voorsitter aangewys, terwyl dr. Deon Lartz (Gereformeerde Kerk Edenvale) en ds. Fanie Coetzee (Gereformeerde Kerk Potchefstroom - Die Bult) as vise-voorsitters aangewys is. Ons dra hulle aan ons Here op vir Sy leiding!

1 BACKGROUND

In history, 2020 will be known as the COVID-19-year. The spread of the virus, the resulting health, social and economic impact and especially the human response to the pandemic, has shown again the need for the gospel of Jesus Christ in our world! That is why it was a privilege to meet electronically on 21 July as Curators of the Theological School Potchefstroom to oversee the training of our brothers who are being equipped to minister the Word of our Lord in the world which we live in.

As Christians we have – according to Ephesians 1 - the privilege to live in this time before the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, who gives us his Spirit of wisdom and revelation. We live in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ who was appointed to be Head over everything for the church. In Him we experience the peace and grace of our Lord and God and the incomparably great power of his Spirit.

2 CURATORS

The curators are appointed by the respective Regionals Synods for a term of three years. With the decision to postpone the General Synod from January 2021 to January 2022, this term had to be extended to January 2022. There has also been a change as chairperson as rev. Piet Venter has asked to be relieved from his duties. We appreciate the enormous work he has done and especially the way he promoted the transparency in the work by the curators. Dr. Gerard Meijer (Reformed Church Oos-Moot) has been appointed as the new chairperson, while dr. Deon Lartz (Reformed Church Edenvale) and rev. Fanie Coetzee (Reformed Church Potchefstroom - Die Bult) have been appointed as vice-chairpersons. We commend them to our Lord for His guidance!

3 PERSONEEL EN STUDENTE VAN DIE TEOLOGIESE SKOOL

Die kuratore het die verantwoordelikheid om vir die personeel en studente van die Teologiese Studente te sorg. Gedurende 2020 het ons professore en administratiewe personeel asook ons studente buitengewone uitdagings beleef. Die normale manier van doen moes verander, met die skuif na aanlyn-onderrig en uitdagings met die praktiese werk en die lewer/aanbieding van preke. Ons personeel was egter in staat om ons studente op besondere maniere te begelei, waarvoor ons ons Here dank! Ons waardeer ook die manier waarop die NWU studente bygestaan het met die nodige tegnologiese ondersteuning om met hul studies te kon voortgaan.

Vir die res van die jaar gaan die studente hul studies via die aanlyn-leer-platform voortsit, terwyl die plaaslike gemeentes betrokke is met die lewering van die preke. Die vierde tot sesde jaar studente gaan op 28 Julie met hul werk begin om hulle in staat te stel om hul studies betyds vir die kuratore se vergadering in November 2020 af te handel, terwyl die ander studente eers met die tweede semester op 24 Augustus sal begin – in lyn met die reëlings wat deur die NWU gemaak is.

Gedurende 2020 het sestig (60) broers begin om hulle as Bedienaars van die Woord te bekwaam. Ons is die Here dankbaar dat agt broers vir die eerste keer by die Teologiese Skool begin studeer het, terwyl ses (6) studente besig is om hulle voor te berei om - as die Here dit wil – by die onderskeie Streeksinode aan te meld vir toelating tot die diens van bedienaar van Woord en Sakrament. Terwyl dit tans nie haalbaar is om die studente persoonlik te ontmoet nie, het die kuratore tog van die tegnologie gebruik gemaak om pastorale gesprekke met sommige van die studente te hê. Waar studente uitdagings ervaar, probeer beide die professore en kuratore om persoonlik met die studente kontak te maak en hulle te help om hul situasies aan te spreek.

3 STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

The curators have the responsibility to care for the staff and students of the Theological School. During 2020 our professors and administrative staff as well as our students have experienced extraordinary challenges. The normal course of events had to be changed, both with the shift to online teaching and the difficulties with practical work and delivering of sermons. Our staff, however, have been able to guide our students in an exceptional way, for which we thank you Lord. We also appreciate the way the NWU has assisted students with the necessary technological support to continue with their studies.

For the rest of the year the students will continue their studies on the online learning platform, while the local congregations are involved to assist with the delivering of the sermons. The fourth to sixth year students will start with their work on 28 July to enable them to finalise their studies in time for the curators' meeting in November 2020, while the other students will only start with the second semester on 24 August – in line with the arrangements made by the NWU.

During 2020 sixty (60) brothers are studying to prepare them as ministers of the Word. We are thankful to the Lord that eight brothers started studying for the first time at the Theological School, while six (6) students are preparing to report – Lord willing – to the respective Regional Synods to be admitted to the office of minister of Word and Sacrament. Even though meetings in person are generally not possible, the curators have also used technological methods to have pastoral conversations with some of the students. Where students are experiencing challenges, both the professors and curators are trying to personally contact the students and help them in addressing their situations.

Die prediking van die evangelie is een van die belangrikste verantwoordelikhede van ‘n predikant. Daarom het die kuratore aandag gegee aan die manier waarop studente begelei word om preke voor te berei. Vir beide die kuratore en die professore is hierdie ‘n baie belangrike saak wat voortdurend aandag kry. Kerke word daarom ook gevra om die professore en kuratore te help juis wanneer studente in gemeentes preek deur genoegsame terugvoer aan die TSP te gee.

The preaching of the gospel is one of the most important responsibilities of a pastor. Therefor the curators have looked at the way the guidance of the students to prepare sermons, is taking place. For both the curators and the professors this is a very important matter which receives continuous attention. Churches are asked to help the professors and curators when students are delivering sermons in the congregations by giving relevant feedback to the TSP.

Ons het tans dertien professore wat geroep is om ons studente toe te rus asook drie hoogs gewaardeerde administratiewe personeellede. Terwyl die kuratore verantwoordelik is om oor die opleiding toesig te hou, het ons professore die verantwoordelikheid om die daaglikse werksaamhede van die TSP te orden en uit te voer. Om hulle te lei, word ‘n Rektor en twee Vise-Rektore aangewys. Aangesien prof. Gert Breed aan die einde van 2020 emeriteer, is ‘n nuwe Rektor (met ingang van Januarie 2021) aangewys in die persoon van prof. Henk Stoker. Prof. Francois Muller is as Vise-Rektor vir Studentesake aangewys, terwyl prof. Francois Viljoen steeds die Vise-Rektor vir Akademiese sake is.

Currently we have thirteen professors who are called to equip our students and three highly appreciated administrative staff members. While the curators are responsible to oversee the training, our professors have to run the daily business at the TSP. To lead them, a Rector and two Vice Rectors are appointed. As prof. Gert Breed is retiring at the end of 2020, a new Rector has been appointed (to start in January 2021) in the person of prof. Henk Stoker and prof. Francois Muller as the Vice Rector for Student Affairs, while prof. Francois Viljoen is still the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs.

4 VERHOUDING MET DIE NWU

Die verhouding tussen die GKSA en Noordwes Universiteit is steeds deel van die agenda van die kuratore. Gesprekke gaan voort om die verhouding tussen die GKSA en die NWU te omskryf en om die pad vorentoe te bepaal ten opsigte van die teologiese opleiding vir ons kerke.

Die finansiële beperkinge wat beide ons eie kerke asook teologiese opleiding in die algemeen ervaar, saam met die verdere implikasies van COVID-19 in hierdie saak, bemoeilik sake. Die kuratore gaan egter die ekstra tyd voor Sinode 2022 probeer gebruik om ‘n sinvolle voorstel aan die Sinode te kan voorberei.

4 RELATIONSHIP WITH NWU

The relationship between the GKSA and the North-West University is still part of the agenda of the curators. Conversations are continuing to define the relationship between the GKSA and the NWU and the way forward in the theological training of our churches.

The financial constraints experienced both by our churches and in theological training in general, together with the added implications of COVID-19 in this respect, is complicating matters. The curators will be using the added time before Synod 2022 to try and finalise a sensible proposal to the Synod.

5 DIE PAD VORENTOE

Met die vergadering van die kuratore aan die einde van 2019 het die kuratore gebid dat ons Here sal sorg dat almal wat met ons teologiese opleiding betrokke is in verbondenheid met, gewortel in en gebou op ons Here Christus Jesus sou lewe. Min het ons geweet wat in die eerste ses maande van 2020 sou gebeur en hoe ons almal net nog meer vanuit Christus, ons Rots, sou moes leef!

Vir die dae wat voorlê herinner ons mekaar, ons professore en studente en al ons broers en susters wat deel is van die GKSA aan die woorde van ons Here in Jesaja 43:

Moenie bang wees nie, Ek verlos jou,
Ek het jou op jou naam geroep, jy is Myne.
As jy deur water moet gaan,
is Ek by jou,
deur riviere,
hulle sal jou nie wegspoel nie;
as jy deur vuur moet gaan,
sal dit jou nie skroei nie,
die vlamme sal jou nie brand nie,
want Ek is die Here jou God,
die Heilige van Israel, jou Redder!

U broers in Christus

Malan van Rhyn
Pieter Kurpershoek

5 THE ROAD FORWARD

With the meeting of the curators at the end of 2019, the curators had prayed that our Lord would ensure that all people involved with our theological training would live in connection with and rooted in and built upon our Lord Christ Jesus. Little did we know what would happen in the first six months of 2020 and how we all would need even more to live from Christ, our Rock!

For the days ahead, we remind each other, our professors and students and all our brothers and sisters who are part of the GKSA of the words of our Lord in Isaiah 43:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!

Your brothers in Christ

Malan van Rhyn
Pieter Kurpershoek