

# NetACT

## Minutes of AGM held in Windhoek, Namibia, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> August, 2006

### Welcome

Rev Absalom Hasheela, the principal of Paulinum United Lutheran Theological Seminary welcomes all delegates, wishing them a good stay at the campus. He explains that it is a United Theological seminary, being a merger of two Lutheran seminaries. Two Lutheran churches joined hands for theological training. Formerly they had separate training schools. The joined school was placed in the neighbourhood of the university. Currently they have 7 lecturers and 53 students. They admit new students every second year, which means that the institution only have two classes at any given time. He assures the Board that they are happy to receive the meeting, and get to know the different institutions. He invites participants to ask for assistance at any time. He offers an apology for the fact that their facilities are not sufficient – thus the meeting is taking place in the chapel. Though they train pastors for Lutheran churches, they also accept students from other churches. Currently they have a student from Angola and also one from Botswana. After reading Matt 5:14-16, he stresses the fact that we are the light of the world – and therefore we have to let our light shine.

### Devotions

After an introduction by Dr Chiphangwi, Rev Anderson Mnthambala prays and reads from Romans 5:1-11. He focusses on vss 1-5, and specifically on three words: peace, grace and joy. Paul is writing about faith. Faith is crucial in all circumstances. We can, however, distinguish between natural faith and saving faith. We tend to trust certain things naturally. Eg we can sit on a chair, or fly in an aeroplane, without enquiring. That's natural faith. Saving faith, however, is different. It can be recognised through its benefits. The first is peace with God – reconciliation with God, restoring friendship. People who know this peace can be sent by God because of this friendship. There is also grace. For example we had safe journeys from so many different places. It's grace! And it is through faith that we have access to this grace. We also have joy – we rejoice in all circumstances. Not only in good times. Even at this meeting we may share in these benefits. Afterwards a few people pray to thank God for allowing us to gather, and be welcomed so warmly, and also to intercede for different governments represented at the meeting.

### Introduction

The chairman, Dr D T Banda, also says a word of welcome. All are invited to participate, even though some may be official delegates and others observers. He stresses that no meeting is the same as the previous ones. Certain themes are almost part of the tradition, but will have to be looked at in a new way in new circumstances. In our proceedings we'll deal with the essence of being a missional church, with cross-cultural ministry, and the unique identity of God (Trinity). While confronted by so many issues (HIV/AIDS, poverty, corruption, etc), we have to focus on God. God is seeking people who worship Him in spirit and truth. Our meeting should be understood in the context of worship. The chairman then asks the Executive Director (ED) to make practical arrangements, and constitute the meeting.

### NB 132 Constitution of meeting

The ED circulates an address list to be updated by all the delegates. He asks all participants to make sure that all their information is correct. He then introduces all delegates according to the list.

#### 132.1 Official delegates

Dr D T Banda (chairman; Justo Mwale Theological College – JMTC)  
 Dr Saindi Chiphangwi (vice-chairman; Zomba Theological College – ZTC)  
 Prof Jurgens Hendriks (executive director [ED]; Stellenbosch University – SU)  
 Rev Henry Murray (Murray Theological College – MTC)  
 Rev Ariko Ekitala (Reformed Institute for Theological Training – RITT)  
 Rev Kruger du Preez (Hefsiba)  
 Dr Ron Hartgerink (Donor representative)  
 Mrs Maggie Madimbo (African Bible College – ABC)  
 Dr Hennie van Deventer (Josophat Mwale Theological Institute – JM TI)  
 Rev Uma Onwunta (Project Manager [PM] – non-voting)

**132.2 Observers**

Rev Rangarirai Rutoro (MTC)  
 Prof Elna Mouton (SU)  
 Ms Janet Guyer (PCUSA)  
 Mrs Helen Hendriks  
 Mrs Barbara Hartgerink  
 Rev Miguel Nobré (Hefsiba)  
 Mr McAlly Chang'anamuno (ABC)  
 Rev Anderson Mnthambala (JMTI)  
 Mrs Edith Chemorion (RITT)  
 Rev Martin Khoaseb (Principal of NETS)  
 Rev Zach Pienaar (Part time lecturer, NETS)  
 Rev George du Toit (Paulinum)  
 Mr Riaan Steyn (student at SU)

**132.3 Angolan delegation**

Pastor Silva Matembo (Kinkuni)  
 Pastor Antonio Pedro Malungo (Gen Secr, IERA)  
 Rev Alexandre dos Santos Mioco (ISEU)  
 Pastor José B Luacute (ISTEL, Lubango)  
 Pastor Avelino Rafael (Dean, ISTEL, Lubango)

**NB 133 Arrangements/announcements**

- 133.1 The ED advertises the African Bible Commentary which was recently published; delegates can view the copy which is available at the meeting. NetACT hopes to get it at cost price for NetACT institutions.
- 133.2 All delegates are reminded that they have to pay a NetACT membership fee. Uma has copies of the accounts from Stellenbosch University – each institutions should make arrangements for payment with Uma.
- 133.3 Some copies of Studying Congregations are also available for member institutions. Any institution that currently has a need for this book, can arrange with the PM.
- 133.4 Copies of previous meetings and the constitution will also be available, and delegates who need those, are free to take some.
- 133.5 There is an invitation to dinner with DRC Windhoek-Oos for tonight. They have donated R23 000 to NetACT for this meeting.
- 133.6 Tea will be served at 11.00 am. Lunch will be taken from 1.00 – 2.00 pm at the URCSA church.

**NB 134 Minutes**

Delegates can check on minutes and arrange with secretary about any additional corrections. The minutes of the Board meeting at Hefsiba in August 2005 were corrected and accepted by the EC (as mandated by the Board)

**NB 135 Nominations for replacements on Executive Committee**

- 135.1 The chairman explains that there is need for the election of a new vice-chairman and secretary. The current vice-chairman, Dr Saindi Chiphangwi, has reached the end of his term, and can be re-elected according to the constitution, but doesn't want to be re-elected due to retirement plans. The secretary, Dr Hennie van Deventer, has accepted a post with Bible Media, and will therefore be leaving Nkhoma soon. It is announced that nominations can be submitted tomorrow morning. The voting members are invited to pray and submit proposals. The following members are eligible:
- Rev Henry Murray
  - Rev Kruger du Preez
  - Mrs Maggie Madimbo
  - Rev Ariko Ekitala
- 135.2 The positions of the Executive Director and the Programme Manager will be handled when the elections are to be done

## NB 136 News from institutions

The chairman asks all delegates to hand in a written summary of the news from their various institutions to the secretary. It will be included in the minutes. In due time the institutions will be given an opportunity to share the information with all the other participants.

## NB 137 Finances

- 137.1 Jurgens introduces the financial issues with reference to the Annual Administrative Report – including financial statements for the previous year (2005), information about budget and funding for 2007, and the services of International Steward.
- 137.2 Ron leads the discussion and highlights the following aspects of the **2005 financial report**:
- a) Income: R410 894.61
  - b) Expenditure: R341 607.25
  - c) Operating profit: R69 287.36
  - d) Main expenses: Scholarships, Manuals and Text books, Travelling (this included even travelling to AGM)
  - e) In answer to a question from the floor about the reduction on “Remuneration”, the ED explains that payments to assistants in the NetACT office were registered as bursaries for the sake of tax advantages.
  - f) It is stressed that there are definite advantages in using the SU system of accounting – it mainly gives donors the confidence that their money is well accounted for.
- 137.3 **Sources of income:**
- a) A Grand Rapids based Trust – for the expansion of Weidenhof house: R218 539.11
  - b) Mustard Seed Foundation: US\$15 000 (mainly for studies on urban mission)
  - c) Hartgerink Trust – two donations of US\$10 000 (one of these to match a similar donation from SU) – already transferred.
  - d) There were also some donations not recorded in the NetACT statements – especially a donation from an anonymous donor to fund Dr Rodney Tshaka’s year of teaching at MTC (R83 096.00), and a donation from a farmer for the accreditation of MTC (R10 000).
- 137.4 **Budget:**
- a) Ron presents a provisional budget for the next 18 months (August 2006 – December 2007).
  - b) The ED explains that the National Research Foundation can be regarded as a potential donor for research done by NetACT. Dr Johan Cilliers has already applied for a grant from NRF for the book to be produced about Preaching on HIV/AIDS. It is important, though, to understand that NRF will only consider such a grant if we make use of recognised and qualified researchers.
  - c) Henry Foundation – promised to sponsor next year’s AGM in Lusaka (together with a seminar that is planned to take place concurrently).
  - d) The expansion of NetACT house – hopefully to be funded by the Stellenbosch University (following a donation of R218 539.11 from Grand Rapids for the same purpose).
  - e) Funds for the book about Preaching on HIV/AIDS – money already dedicated on the previous budget for this purpose; more will however be needed – but this will be discussed later on the agenda.
- 137.5 **Funding 2007**
- a) The ED reports that he had met **business people** in Johannesburg, and that he wants to link them up with NetACT institutions for funding of various projects. Many of these have huge financial resources and a heart for Africa, especially for leadership development, but need to be challenged – and a relationship between them and the various institutions needs to be established and maintained. A level of trust must be developed, where both the institution and the donor will feel comfortable and satisfied.
    - In the discussion it is emphasized that the relationship is crucial in such a situation; it may not have an immediate effect or pay immediate dividends, but is worth the effort.
    - The ED wants to know from the NetACT members whether there is a special concern about big donors in terms of the usual practice of attaching strings and demanding control over the spending of the funds – or can they be involved, even on the boards of various institutions? The relationship with such benevolent Christian business people may even lead to a network of other contacts that may benefit the particular institution.
    - It is suggested from the floor that the needs of institutions ought to be known – and then be matched with the interests of specific donors. This implies that institutions

- need to plan properly, and thus know exactly what they need according to their own plan. It must be realised, though, that donors have their own interests, and may eventually push institutions in directions into which they don't necessarily want to go.
- Therefore it is strongly emphasized that the sense of ownership of institutions/ churches should in no way be eroded. Donors play significant roles in most of the countries represented, and are notorious for trying to influence things through their donations.
  - **Resolution:**
    - ✓ We as NetACT must be guided by faith not fear. Therefore we must be willing to venture into new things.
    - ✓ The Board thus agrees to collect information about the plans and needs of its member institutions, in order to connect the different institutions to available donors.
    - ✓ The Board empowers the ED to continue building contacts and matching them with needs. In the process, however, we must always be sensitive not to erode ownership.
    - ✓ Information can be provided even in the summary of what is going on at the various schools (for time of sharing)
- b) **National Research Foundation** – some projects have already benefitted; the opportunity needs to be developed though. This makes the accreditation of the NetACT institutions particularly important, since NRF will only fund projects where research can be done by recognised and duly qualified researchers.
- c) **Fundraising tour** – The ED and Dr Ron stress the fact that it was really the speeches by Dr DT Banda and Mr Uma Onwunta that carried the day and influenced the possible donors during the fundraising tour of the USA. The NetACT house, in particular, was an attractive prospect for funding, seeing that it assists students to stay within Africa for their studies, and provides a home away from home, thus developing key leaders in Africa (as a result R218 539 was donated for the expansion of this house!). In the meantime the donors are waiting to see what SU will do in terms of this project. It is clear, nevertheless, that Cornerstone Foundation will be happy to feel that they have been a catalyst.
- d) **Rent free loans** – the Board takes note that such loans are available from the Reformed Church in America (RCA) for the development of income generating projects at the various institutions. Information about the administration of these loans is available from Ron Hartgerink. The meeting thanks Ron for his efforts in negotiating this deal.
- e) **International Steward** – This group was visited during the fundraising tour. They made it clear that they are not a donor organisation, but rather train people/churches/institutions about proper and effective ways of raising funds. Some representatives of NetACT attended a seminar in Paarl (SA) in November 2005, and reported to the EC (see EC 107, 116). The courses specifically focus on tithing and giving. This group has evidently helped churches and institutions all over the world to improve their financial position quite drastically. The Board takes note that International Steward is available to assist churches in our area, and encourages member institutions to make use of their services. The NetACT Office expresses willingness to liaise with International Steward. However, they can also be contacted directly. It is reported that RITT had organised a meeting with the help of IS, and was very impressed with the material. Eventually the purpose of this group is to develop faithfulness in terms of Biblical ways of giving and thus breaking the dependency syndrome.
- f) **Annual membership fee** – the PM reports that four institutions has paid their fees at the meeting, and that the rest have promised to pay as soon as they get back home. The institutions that have already submitted their payments are: JMTC, ZTC, RITT, JMTI. Stellenbosch promises to do the payment by way of a transfer from the Faculty account to the NetACT account. Some enquire about double payments, and the PM promises to investigate.

## **NB 138 NetACT office**

- 138.1 The Board takes note that Rev Uma Onwunta was appointed by the EC as Programme Manager in the place of Pieter van Santen.
- 138.2 Rev Onwunta will go on with this responsibility until June 2007 when he will return home to Nigeria. The Board accepts this proposal.

- 138.3 He will also continue with the duty of the administration of the Weidenhof house until his departure in June 2007. The ED and the EC are given the mandate to appoint a new in-house-administrator closer to Rev Onwunta's departure, subject to the availability of a capable person at that particular time.
- 138.4 In the light of the decision taken at the previous Board meeting (Hefsiba), the following decision is taken concerning the ED's offer of combining the duties of the ED and the PM in full time capacity:
- a) The Board appoints a small task group, consisting of Dr Saindi Chipangwi, Dr Ron Hartgerink and Prof Elna Mouton, to prepare a draft contract for Prof Hendriks before the end of the meeting. In doing this they should negotiate with ED to work out a proposal about his job description, the cost involved, etc. This draft should be ready by lunch on Wednesday to be discussed by the full Board.

### **NB 139 Lecturer exchange**

- 139.1 The Board is once again reminded that the purpose of the lecturer exchange programme is to assist in situations of crisis, relieve work pressure and to free staff of institutions to complete their studies. At the previous AGM it was suggested that lecturers embarking on doctoral studies should be given a minimum of six months to concentrate on their studies and get their research on the way. However, the question is then: who will continue the work at home?
- 139.2 The case of Dr Rodney Tshaka is cited as example. He came forward due to an urgent need at MTC, and a donor was found to sponsor his salary. MTC reports that it has been very beneficial to them; in the first place to Rev Rutoro who gets the chance to concentrate fully on his study for the entire year. It has also been beneficial for Dr Tshaka himself, in the sense that he has been gaining a lot of experience in teaching. MTC therefore expresses its sincere gratitude for this provision. The Board asks the Office to thank the unknown donor.
- 139.3 However, the ED reports that most of the other institutions have not made use of the opportunity so far this year. Therefore he suggests that those who have not used the allotted funds should forfeit it, and that the available funds should in future be used on the basis of first come first served.
- 139.4 In the ensuing discussion the members emphasize that they still have the intention to use the funds before the end of this year. Circumstances made it difficult for some schools to use the funds as allocated. They do admit, however, that lecturers from USA or SU will have to be invited long ahead of time.
- 139.5 Angolan delegates enquire about the possibility of inviting people even from Brazil or Portugal (because they need Portuguese speaking lecturers).
- 139.6 **Resolution:** The Board does not accept the ED's proposals (those were in any case meant to provoke discussion!). Instead the Board rules that an amount of R8000 be provided to institutions that apply, to be used by the institution according to their need (both for transport and other expenses).
- 139.7 The Board further asks the institutions to present more specific proposals concerning the type of lecturers needed when requesting the funds. That would assist in identifying appropriate people.
- 139.8 It is also suggested that we should perhaps differentiate between relieve lecturers and proper exchange lecturers. Even Stellenbosch can do with exchange lecturers (and could also consider inviting lecturers from the other NetACT institutions for the sake of broadening the scope and variety of what they teach).

### **NB 140 Publications**

- 140.1 The ED reports that 278 copies of the second imprint of "Studying Congregations in Africa" are still available; schools that need the book must bring their requests to Uma during the meeting.
- 140.2 The Portuguese translation of the book has created lot of trouble. Eventually it was re-translated by Rev Venancio Patreque. The ED requests that the translation should be finally edited before printing. The delegates from ISTEEL in Angola agree to do this work and the Board awards this responsibility to them. It is further reported that the printing will probably be more expensive. There is still an amount of R10 000 remaining for this purpose on the previous budget, but the ED requests that an extra amount of R15 000 be allocated.
- 140.3 The proposal of Dr Johan Cilliers concerning a book about Preaching on HIV/AIDS is tabled. It is agreed that at least ten people will be needed to help with the writing of the book. The funds donated by RML for this purpose (R19000) will clearly not be sufficient. It is suggested that an additional amount of R30 000 will be needed, and this is provisionally added to the budget. However, the ED also points out that Dr Cilliers has already applied for a grant from the

National Research Foundation (R150 000). Therefore there is hope that NetACT can be refunded if the NRF grants this money. The Board asks Ms Edith Chemorion to draw up a list of possible people to assist in the writing of this book, including a good balance of ladies. She will present the proposal later in the meeting to be discussed and ratified by the Board. Some of the names already suggested are the following:

- a) Dr Johan Cilliers (editor)
  - b) Rev Christo Greyling
  - c) Rev Venancio Patreque
  - d) Edith Chemorion (RITT)
  - e) Rev Rachel Mash
  - f) Prof Dube (University of Botswana)
  - g) Publisher in Luanda?
- 140.4 Ethics in Africa – Prof Nico Koopman could not present a new proposal due to illness. The ED suggests that this will be prepared for the next AGM, and that Prof Koopman will also apply for NRF grant in the meantime. The Board will then decide at the next meeting about people to assist with this book.
- 140.5 The ED announces that the widow of the late Prof David Bosch informed him that the book “Transforming Mission” is available at a reduced price of R85 per copy. Some members, however, complain that if the book would be ordered directly from India, it might be more expensive than that. Institutions therefore request that the book be ordered by NetACT office, and made available to institutions. The Board accepts the proposal and rules that the amount should not exceed R8000 on the budget.
- 140.6 African Bible Commentary – the ED indicates that the book can possibly be obtained by NetACT at R200 a copy and will then be made available to the institutions. Included in the provision made under the previous point for purchase of books to help institutions.
- 140.7 The vice-chairman also introduces a book of Dr Steven Paas, one of the lecturers at ZTC, with the title “The Faith Moves South” – available at Kachere. Kachere is publishing a lot of other books at very affordable prices.
- 140.8 The secretary informs the Board that he is accepting a new post with Bible Media in SA, and will also have the responsibility of developing Christian Literature in conjunction with the Christian Literature Fund (CLF). He makes a special appeal for the cooperation of all the NetACT institutions in this venture, in particular to produce theological literature, and to encourage others to write other Christian literature. The Board acknowledges this challenge.

#### **NB 141 Presence of the media at HIV/AIDS discussion**

- 141.1 Janet Guyer poses some questions about the presence of the media (newspaper) at our discussions concerning the way the theological institutions deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS. She feels it may inhibit the free sharing of information and discussion. The Board accepts the proposal that the media be informed that we will issue a communique at the end of the meeting concerning the meeting, and that we would therefore prefer to have our discussions on HIV/AIDS in camera.
- 141.2 Janet hands out a questionnaire about what institutions are currently doing in terms of HIV/AIDS. It has to be completed by tomorrow morning.

#### **NB 142 People to write communique**

Following people are suggested and accepted:

- Dr Saindi Chiphangwi
- Prof Elna Mouton
- Dr Ron Hartgerink
- Mrs Maggie Madimbo
- Rev Ariko Ekitala

#### **Day Closing**

Dr Chiphangwi closes the day’s business in prayer.

## Minutes of proceedings on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2006

### Devotions

Edith Chemorion leads the morning devotions. She reads **Exod 19:3-7**. God led the Israelites out of Egypt. Because of this He expected them to listen to Him and keep his covenant. God Himself would enable them. He'll make them special. They will be for Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Out of all the nations they would be his treasured possession. As NetACT we have many challenges. We must realise that we are chosen by God for a purpose – to be his treasured possession. He will enable us to render a relevant service to the churches – so that they can again serve God in the world in which we live. Kruger du Preez prays for the day's proceedings, and for the church, as it gropes with the challenges of our time.

### Welcoming NETS representative

The staff of NETS decided to alternate in attending the meeting. Rev Hugh Prentice of the Anglican church, who is one of the lecturers at NETS, is in attendance today. He is welcomed by the ED.

### NB 143 Arrangements

- 143.1 The ED explains the day's programme, which will only run until 15h30, in order to give delegates a bit of time to see the city of Windhoek. In the evening the group will have a dinner at Heja restaurant.
- 143.2 Rev Kruger du Preez, who is doing his doctoral study about curriculum development at NetACT institutions, requests the meeting to set aside half an hour on the programme (just before lunch) for delegates to fill in the questionnaire he has already handed out concerning the issue.

### NB 144 Nominations

Delegates from all the institutions are given an opportunity to hand in their nominations for the two positions on the EC in which replacements are needed. Rev Uma Onwunta collects all the nominations.

### NB 145 NetACT house

- 145.1 NetACT obtained a donation from Cornerstone Trust for an extension of the house (R218000). However, SU suggested that it would not be wise to add just a few rooms – the full available space should rather be used. Plans were drawn by the SU.
- 145.2 The ED again explains the situation concerning the propriety of the house. Hartgerink Trust bought part of the house and donated it to the SU. The DRC also recently agreed to donate their part of the house to the SU. The SU therefore has full say on the house, with provision that it will mainly be used for students from Africa, and in particular for students (and lecturers) from NetACT institutions. Even the university administration now understands well that the NetACT students is a special case, since most of them cannot afford the other available accommodation for international students. It nevertheless seems crucial to have an official contract with the SU about the privileges of NetACT. According to the ED the NetACT office will make sure that such a contract is produced which will be legally binding for both parties, and can thus afford peace of mind about the future use of the house.
- 145.3 In the meantime the two plots have been consolidated and will be used to add 12 rooms according to the plans submitted. The plans are not final yet. The Board therefore mandates the EC to approve the final plans so as to give permission for the construction work.
- 145.4 A question as to whether the possibility of adding extra rooms for income generating has been considered, is answered by reminding the Board that it might cause a rise in accommodation costs which could also affect the affordability even for NetACT students. The DRC is concerned that this privilege must be protected.
- 145.5 The Board agrees that it would be acceptable to let ladies from other countries use the NetACT house, but it would be helpful if they would have their own section of the building with separate facilities.
- 145.6 The report of the current administrator, Rev Uma Onwunta, is received and discussed. Two recommendations are tabled. The first is about the production of an administrative manual for the house. Uma explains that all interested parties will be involved in setting up the manual. This is particularly important when a new in-house-administrator will take over from Rev

Onwunta. The Board approves this recommendation and asks the NetACT office to go ahead with the work.

- 145.7 The Board thanks the ED and the previous PM (Pieter van Santen) for the important role they have played in getting the administration of the house in proper order. The Board also thanks Rev Onwunta for excellent services rendered as in-house-administrator.

#### **NB 146 Symbolic decentralisation of power**

- 146.1 Dr Ron Hartgerink perceives an ongoing concern amongst NetACT institutions about the centralisation of “power” at Stellenbosch, and suggests that it should be addressed more openly and directly. It is an issue that has surfaced at every meeting since the inception of NetACT in 2001. He feels that some kind of symbolic move away from Stellenbosch might be called for in order to confirm that SU is not the “big boss” in this network.
- 146.2 Prof Elna Mouton, the dean of SU Faculty of Theology, welcomes the suggestion, and expresses their concern about wrong impressions that may exist.
- 146.3 The entire Board agrees that this is such a crucial issue that it requires thorough discussion at the next AGM in Lusaka. It may also involve the question as to whether other universities/ theological faculties in South Africa could join NetACT (this will in any case be discussed when dealing with the issue of new members on the agenda).

#### **NB 147 Communication**

- 147.1 The Board re-opens the discussion about the needs of the different institutions in terms of computers for the sake of communication. It is quite obvious that the requirements are extensive, and therefore it seems unlikely that NetACT will have the resources available on its budget for the purchase of IT equipment.
- 147.2 The ED suggests that the funds should be raised by contacting specific congregations with the request for assistance in this regard. The Board accepts this proposal, and asks the office to take up this task.
- 147.3 The institutions will have to provide the NetACT office with specific proposals concerning their needs to establish communication (not IT needs in general), including the financial estimates for the required equipment, as soon as possible. The ED will then deal with each institution directly according to their request.

#### **NB 148 Scholarships**

- 148.1 The Board takes note of the fact that Mustard Seed Foundation has promised bursaries to the value of R102 000 (\$15 000). This amount has already been included on the provisional budget for scholarships.
- 148.2 The ED emphasizes the importance of outsourcing scholarships. Since NetACT itself does not really have the resources to grant significant scholarships, it can play the role of trying to get other organisations or individuals to sponsor the studies of applicants for further studies. Thus we can minimize the number of scholarship candidates on the NetACT budget.
- 148.3 It is further suggested, however, that NetACT should keep a “Fund for Scholarship opportunities arising” (emergencies) and the Board provisionally decides to set aside R40 000 for this item in the budget.
- 148.4 With appreciation the Board also notes that the SU Faculty of Theology often gives assistance to foreign students from their own funds. The Board thanks Prof Mouton for her sympathetic attitude.
- 148.5 The Board takes note of the following applications for scholarships, and will allocate available funds, while trying to outsource these scholarships as much as possible (probable sources indicated in brackets):
- a) Mrs Edith Chemorion (DRC Durbanville-Bergsig)
  - b) Rev Rangarirai Rutoro (DRC Mosselbay)
  - c) Rev Runyowa
  - d) Mrs Chapota
  - e) Rev Nyasulu (already paid from funds retrieved from Rev Ngigii, who got a scholarship elsewhere).

#### **NB 149 New Members**

- 149.1 The Board takes note that there are still some problems with the application of the **Namibian institutions**. It is reported that the relationship between the various institutions (NETS, Paulinum, Theological Research Institute of Namibia [TRIN]) is rather fragile. NETS seems to

be interested to join NetACT alone (if the others would opt out). They will have to take the process further after the meeting and make an official application.

- 149.2 **Theological College of Zimbabwe** – still interested, but waiting for an opening in NetACT, since they have the impression that we would not want to add members at present. The Zimbabwean delegates also testify that TCZ is evangelical, and has even applied for accreditation with ACTEA. The Board accepts them as candidate for membership, but the problem still remains the escalation of costs as the organisation grows.
- 149.3 Interest in membership was shown from **University of the Free State** through a letter from Dr Rian Venter to the ED. The ED has already notified Dr Venter about procedures and guidelines previously formulated (NB 63). The Board welcomes this development, and decides that the EC should open dialogue on membership with the UFS through Dr Venter. Eventually they will have to present a proper application to be handled by the Board. It is further suggested that they should realise that, if they would join, they can actually play the role of an income generator for creating opportunities in this network (like Stellenbosch is doing).
- 149.4 **Institutions in Angola** – Pastor Antonio Pedro Malungo presents a moving plea for the reception of various institutions into the fold of NetACT. He explains that they find it very difficult to re-establish their infrastructures after the war. Most people (and churches and theological institutions) fled to the cities during the war. Therefore it is important to create opportunities for institutions to develop, and participation in NetACT might well be one of these opportunities. It would help to foster unity, even within Angola (between the various theological schools). After all, one of the aims of NetACT is also to bring about unity and fellowship between all the institutions. In the ensuing discussion the general feeling is that it would be beneficial for more institutions to join, if it were not for the financial constraints facing NetACT. The Board therefore invites all the institutions to apply individually for membership, and the applications will be handled at the next AGM according to the requirements of our constitution and previous minutes (NB 63), and the availability of funds.
- 149.5 **Range of membership:** The Board confirms that NetACT is a network of theological institutions in Africa *South of the Sahara*, and not just in *Southern Africa* as was indicated in the Annual Administrative Report (correction of minute NB 63, guideline a)).

## Day Closing

Rev Alexandre dos Santos Mioco closes the meeting with prayer.

# Minutes of Proceedings on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2006

## Devotions

Pastor Avelino Rafael reads Luke 9:10-17. He suggests that one of our biggest challenges, even in theological institutions, is to find resources. We often struggle to do work because of a lack of resources. Somehow the disciples of Jesus had the same problem. Many people were following Jesus. They became hungry and tired. Jesus looked at them and said to his disciples: Feed them. Their response was: We don't have the necessary resources. It would cost too much. Rather send away the people. Jesus replied with a crucial question (especially when it comes to the issue of resources): What do you have available? They said: We only have two fish and five loaves. We must realise that this was a test of their faith. They were limiting Jesus, in many ways. We have to learn a number of things from this whole story. First is: Jesus is the great Provider. He provides sufficiently and abundantly. Secondly: He provides through people. He asked them: What do you have? We have to learn this lesson in our churches and institutions – to start with what we have. People in development programmes usually start with the same question – what do the people have? Then we may discover that we actually have a lot. The common syndrome is: we have nothing... people don't count the things close them. Theological institutions also don't always appreciate and use what we have. Thirdly Jesus says: bring your resources. That is a call for commitment. He is the Lord; He can command. But, fourthly, He works in an orderly way. He had a methodology. He told them to form groups of 50. This is often a reason for our lack of resources – we are not orderly in use of the resources we do have. Finally, Jesus also requires accountability. He commanded them to go and collect all the left-overs – nothing to be wasted. To us the challenge from this passage is: let's put our faith in Jesus who can provide in our needs. We have a wide variety of circumstances. The question is: Where do we put our trust?

After this all the Portuguese speaking delegates form a choir and sing the well-known song, "What a friend we have in Jesus" in Portuguese. Rev José Luacute offers a prayer.

## **NB 150 Announcements**

- 150.1 Rev Zach Pienaar of the URCSA is organising a function with the moderamen of the DRC and URCSA for this evening. It is suggested that the Portuguese choir can sing again. The chairman then proposes that there should also be a Chichewa and an Afrikaans choir.
- 150.2 The ED welcomes the delegate from NETS. He is Rev Paul Gunning.

## **NB 151 HIV/AIDS in theological curricula**

NetACT invited Janet Guyer (PCUSA consultant and coordinator for HIV/AIDS projects in Southern and East Africa) to lead us in planning on the current role of theological institutions in terms of HIV/AIDS. She has conducted an informal survey through a questionnaire that was given to all delegates on Tuesday.

- 151.1 Janet presents the outcome of the questionnaires. The results will be added to the minutes as an addendum.
- 151.2 From the discussions it is clear that NetACT needs to reformulate and rethink its goal concerning this issue. When the delegates were asked to explain their vision for what should be done in our institutions concerning the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the following aspects came forward:
- a) Training – training of trainers – mobilisation – capacity building
  - b) Require funding for training and other matters.
  - c) Develop models and methods for sharing information among NetACT members.
  - d) Create an AIDS desk.
  - e) Develop basic biblical understanding of issues around HIV and AIDS.
  - f) Publish AIDS-related materials.
  - g) Rewrite Christo Greyling's book to be more user friendly.
  - h) Retrain people to use module I and create module II.
  - i) Encourage institutions to be proactive.
  - j) Engender theological education.
  - k) Use an interdisciplinary approach.

### **151.3 Resolutions:**

The Board resolves to concentrate its efforts regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the following issues:

- a) In terms of what NetACT as an organisation can do, we need to focus on what is happening and should happen in and to the member institutions – and only through them to the church and the society. In other words, NetACT as such cannot offer programmes on the wider level.
- b) It remains crucial to make sure that the member institutions have the books and materials available to present a course on this issue. This implies that we need to identify existing resources and inform the institutions about those. In the absence of an AIDS desk, the NetACT office can take initiative in sending out a circular, which may also include such information. Institutions can assist each other by making the material they are currently using (whether from a different source, or their own) available to others. In other words, we should pool resources.
- c) The booklet of the Nehemiah Bible Institute on "Building your Ability to Deal with HIV/AIDS" is specifically mentioned as a valuable resource which is currently used at several NetACT institutions. TEEM (Theological Education by Extension in Malawi) has also translated this booklet into Chichewa.
- d) It is also important, though, that we should be producing new material. The situation is constantly changing! Members can take initiative on this, but we should also not hesitate to make use of other experts in this field (as we did with Rev Christo Greyling). Janet Guyer volunteers to assist NetACT institutions in finding help in this regard.
- e) A particular area in which we as theological institutions can play a significant role, is to establish the theological basis for a change of worldview, (theology, anthropology, ecology), culture and behaviour. The question is however, what we mean by worldview. The Board therefore appoints an adhoc committee to look at this question, including Prof Elna Mouton, Rev Kruger du Preez, Ms Maggie Madimbo and Rev Ariko Ekitala.

- f) The Board agrees that there is still a need to identify and train new trainers of trainers (to replace Amon and Janet). Institutions can propose suitable candidates for this purpose. This can lead to the “revival” of the idea of an AIDS desk within NetACT.
  - g) The Board also stresses the need to review the HIV/AIDS curriculum we are using in the different institutions periodically.
- 151.4 Budget implication: It is suggested that an amount of R50 000 might be needed for the above-mentioned activities.
- 151.5 Finally the Board expresses its sincere appreciation to Janet Guyer for guiding us in this crucial discussion, and for the fact that she has used her own funds for this purpose.

### **NB 152 Vote of appreciation to SU**

- 152.1 The Board expresses sincere appreciation to the Rector, Prof Chris Brink and to Stellenbosch University for the support given to NetACT. In particular we want to mention the following:
- a) The SU makes its resources and facilities freely available to NetACT, especially for the administration of our funds.
  - b) The International Office and the Faculty of Theology of SU are rendering invaluable services to NetACT institutions and students studying at the SU.
  - c) SU donated US\$10 000 to NetACT, matching an equal donation from the Hartgerink Trust (which was granted on condition that it is matched by SU).
  - d) SU is taking responsibility for the administration, maintenance and extension of the houses in Weidenhof street, which were donated to the university, but which are still being used for NetACT students in particular. NetACT is particularly grateful for the plans of SU to spend a lot of money on extending these facilities by building at least 12 extra rooms on the premises.

### **NB 153 Language training for Angolans**

- 153.1 It is noted that the theological institutions in Angola requested assistance in order to be trained competence in the use of the English language, specifically for the sake of further studies.
- 153.2 At the request of NetACT, SU has been investigating possibilities. Mr Christoff Pauw presents their report to the Board. Mainly there seems to be two options:
- a) Either the training can take place in Stellenbosch – this implies that the students will have to be in Stellenbosch full time for an entire year. It’s clear that this option will be rather expensive – it may cost more than R100 000 per student per year.
  - b) The second option is that tutors can be sent to Angola to present the course on that side. This is likely to cost about R500 000 over two years, but 15-20 people can benefit from that.
- 153.3 Some of the Angolan delegates emphasize that it is always more beneficial to learn a language in the environment where it is commonly used. The Board realises that this is an important aspect to keep in mind, but will also have to look at other aspects affecting the feasibility of the project.
- 153.4 Mr Pauw confirms that SU would be willing to sponsor a further visit to Angola to investigate the best modalities for such language training.
- 153.5 The Board refers the matter for further discussion to a meeting of SA and Namibian churches involved with the churches in Angola that will take place tomorrow (Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2006).
- 153.6 The Board thanks Mr Christoff Pauw for his efforts in this regard, and asks him to convey NetACT’s appreciation to SU for their assistance. In general NetACT also appreciates the fact that Mr Pauw has attended this meeting, and has thus confirmed the interest of the International Office of SU in our activities.

### **NB 154 Accreditation**

- 154.1 The Board notes that new requirements concerning accreditation are being set up by the SA government that will also affect the accreditation of qualifications of NetACT students coming to study there.
- 154.2 Prof Elna Mouton presents and explains the new requirements, starting with a reference to 1 Peter 3:15. Her presentation is attached as an addendum.
- 154.3 Appeal from Prof Mouton:
- a) We should get rid of the idea of superior and inferior institutions and evaluate them for the particular contribution they can make. In this process we also need to be gender sensitive.
  - b) God is calling NetACT to respond positively, proactively and creatively. We should do this in harmony and coordination, without competition and pride (1 Peter 3:15).
- 154.4 **Decisions on the way forward:**

- a) The template for accreditation must be applied to all the four year B Th courses at NetACT institutions. That should in the end qualify these degrees for NQF level 7. The Faculty of Theology at SU offers their assistance in this process in order to upgrade these degrees to NQF level 7 (It is noted that Prof H L Bosman has already given the assurance that he will assist the institutions with this task).
- b) The Board appoints Prof Jurgens Hendriks and Rev Kruger du Preez as delegates for negotiations between ACTEA, HEQC and NetACT concerning a unified strategy for the accreditation of theological institutions. This meeting will be organised with the help of Prof Jan Botha (Division of Academic Planning & Quality Assurance of SU).
- c) The Board once again encourages all NetACT institutions to apply for ACTEA accreditation, and decides to make budget provision for that. (R40 000 included in the budget). [ACTEA addresses: [sbcunn@myrealbox.com](mailto:sbcunn@myrealbox.com) ; [scott.cunningham@sim.org](mailto:scott.cunningham@sim.org) ; [actejajs@yahoo.com](mailto:actejajs@yahoo.com) ]
- d) At the same time all institutions are encouraged to continue to seek national accreditation in the countries where they are operating.

### **NB 155 Curriculum development**

- 155.1 The Board takes note of the fact that Rev Kruger du Preez of Hefsiba in Mozambique has embarked on his doctoral studies concerning the development of curricula at the different NetACT institutions. Rev du Preez explains that the questionnaires that were distributed to all delegates at the beginning of this meeting are a very crucial part of his research. Very often it is difficult to get a good response on a questionnaire. Therefore he and his promoter, Prof Hendriks, decided to get this done at the AGM.
- 155.2 The two questionnaires deal with the current situation at the institutions concerning curricula (first questionnaire) and the values to be included in a curriculum (second questionnaire).
- 155.3 Provide existing curricula or send it to address in Dedza (as soon as possible). These will be part of the research for Rev du Preez' thesis for his doctorate.
- 155.4 Progress with research proposal. Still needs to be accepted by the Faculty. Will apply for funding from NRF. Good chance to be granted, but must get confirmation from all institutions that they really need such a study.
- 155.5 Board approves that all current member institutions as well as observer institutions (Angola and Namibia) be involved in this research.

### **NB 156 Annual meetings**

- 156.1 The Board sincerely thanks all those who have been assisting in organising this year's meeting. In particular gratitude is due to Paulinum for providing their facilities, and the Windhoek URCSA congregation, for providing accommodation and food to all the delegates.
- 156.2 The Board grants the request that the 2009 AGM should take place in Stellenbosch to coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Faculty of Theology.
- 156.3 It is further resolved that the 2008 AGM is provisionally awarded to RITT.
- 156.4 The Board approves the suggestion that the 2007 AGM will take place at JMTC in Lusaka.
  - a) It is agreed that it will be preceded by a conference organised in collaboration with ISSRC and a group from PCUSA, and that JMTC will also present a theological conference on the final day.
  - b) The date of the meeting is set for the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2007.
  - c) The theme of the first conference (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2007) will be: "The effects of the AIDS pandemic and poverty on Church life in Sub-Saharan Africa: Stewardship Implications"
  - d) The theme of the theological conference on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2007 will be: "The prophetic witness of the Church in networking with government, business and other NGO's to address contextual issues".
  - e) The Board notes with appreciation that the Henry Foundation will supply US\$6500 towards the travelling costs for this meeting to NetACT institutions.
  - f) It is also noted that each NetACT institution will be expected to present a paper. Since it will be an international conference, the Board stresses the importance of making sure that the quality of the papers will be on standard. It is suggested that the respective institutions should nominate appropriate people to present the papers. The NetACT office will be available to assist in the process by giving guidance in doing proper research for the papers.

### **Closing**

The day's proceedings is closed with prayer.

## Minutes of proceedings on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2006

### Devotions

Rev Henry Murray offers the opening prayer. 2 Thess 2:13-15. Purpose of the letter to increase the love and fellowship. Especially needed in times of trouble as many of us may be experiencing in the different countries we present. Second objective of letter: alerting the believers against false teachers. We have to be accountable to God, even for what we are teaching. Question more than that: how effective are our teaching and preaching? Are people really transformed through what we teach? Sometimes preaching may be strongly influenced by the customs and tradition. Syncretism. In passage we read: Main motivation found in passage read: were chosen by God, through his grace, not because of who or what we are. We are people from a wide variety of backgrounds. All chosen and sent by God to teach people His will and the good news. God has unlimited resources. We should not rely on people or on a particular country or on circumstances. Let God Himself strengthen us. Maggie Madimbo prays again after the singing of "What a friend we have in Jesus" in different languages.

### Welcome

The chairman welcomes Rev Kees van Dam, today's representative from NETS.

### NB 157 Amendment of NetACT Goals

- 157.1 Dr Ron Hartgerink starts with reference to Mission and Goal statement of NetACT. Comments that we need to remind ourselves again and again about this statement. Question is: how do we feel about this statement a year after we have produced this statement at Hefsiba in Mozambique? Probably the most important addition was the phrase was "...created and directed by these institutions..."
- 157.2 He then proposes an amendment of the goal concerning HIV/AIDS in the statement of goals produced at Hefsiba. The proposal is the following:  
**Current goal:** Enhance and maintain the relevance of NetACT's proprietary HIV/AIDS course and ensure that it remains part of the curriculum at each of our institutions.  
**Amendment:** Ensure that an HIV/AIDS course is developed and maintained as a routine part of the normal curriculum at each NetACT institution.
- 157.3 The Board accepts this change, together with the following proposals concerning the interpretation and implementation of this goal:
- NetACT will "ensure" this goal by asking each institution to report on their experience with their HIV/AIDS course at each Annual Meeting.
  - The Lecturer giving the HIV/AIDS course will be the institution's point contact for HIV/AIDS matters.
  - Selection of course materials is left to each institution. However, NetACT strongly recommends that a discussion of gender issues be a prominent part of the course.
  - It is recognised that costs for both materials and training could be substantial, but that the NetACT Board may not vote to fund this effort. Nevertheless, NetACT is urging that these courses be put in place and that they become routine.

### NB 158 Accepting new version of NetACT Mission and Goal statement

The Board approves the amended version of the Mission and Goals of NetACT as stated below, but ask all institutions to reconsider the whole statement and suggest amendments and additions to the next AGM. The chairman appeals to all institutions to take this task seriously and not wait until just before the next meeting.

#### Mission

**NetACT is a network of theological institutions in Sub Saharan Africa, created and directed by these institutions, to assist them in preparing leaders for missional congregations.**

#### NetACT's Major Goals

- Upgrade curriculum standards at our member institutions.

- Develop an effective system of communication, consultation and networking among all member institutions.
- Provide scholarships to advance the theological training of our institutions' lecturers.
- Create an affordable and welcoming living environment for lecturers who are receiving advanced training.
- Organize lecturer exchanges among our institutions to provide needed expertise, and to create space and time for lecturers to further their studies.
- Maintain an adequately staffed coordinating office.
- Publish theological handbooks relevant to the African context.
- Ensure that an HIV/AIDS course is developed and maintained as a routine part of the normal curriculum at each NetACT institution.

### **NB 159 Additional proposals about HIV/AIDS curriculum**

- 158.1 It is suggested that all institutions should include a "stand alone" course about HIV/AIDS.
- 158.2 The Board further rules that a basic list of items to be included in the curriculum for this course be provided and followed by all the institutions. This does not mean regulating the exact content of the course taught at different institutions, but guiding them as to the most important aspects to be emphasized (or not be forgotten)
- 158.3 The Board requests Janet Guyer to provide such a list as a starting point for the implementation of the above-mentioned decision.

### **NB 160 Reports to AGM**

The Board decides that all member institutions should give a written report at every AGM, that will be ordered according to the goals set by the organisation. It means that the report should deal with issues like curriculum, accreditation, lecturer exchange, courses on HIV/AIDS, etc. The ED/NetACT office will provide each institution a pro-forma report, including all these aspects/goals, which will have to be returned to the office before the AGM. Some members of the Board indicate, however, that they would want to consider and approve this way of doing at their institutions before fully implementing it. It would also mean that even the format of the AGM will need to change to include these reports as an integral part of the agenda. Therefore the Board resolves that the implementation will be provisional.

### **NB 161 Budget: May 31, 2006 - December 31, 2007**

Dr Ron Hartgerink presents an updated version of the spreadsheet given at the beginning of the meeting, including the financial implications of all decisions so far taken at the current meeting.

- 161.1 The total deficit on this budget (income minus expenses) is R173,659. The Board therefore faces the challenge to remove items from the budget so that income and expenditure will balance.
- 161.2 The Board agrees that the R60 000 suggested for the upgrading of communication/computers can be removed, provided that the NetACT office will make a serious effort to obtain funds for this purpose from other donors.
- 161.3 On lecturer exchange only two applications have so far been received (from MTC and Hefsiba), but other schools (JMTC and JMTI) indicate that they are also desperate for assistance in this regard. The Board decides that other applications have to be received at the NetACT office within the next week in order to be considered. Altogether only R48 000 will remain on the budget for this purpose.
- 161.4 There is a question as to whether the Angolan institutions, as non-voting members, would be eligible for assistance with lecturer exchange. The Board rules that they could apply for assistance, on account of the precedent that was created at previous meetings.
- 161.5 The Board decides to cut the item on the writing of AIDS courses for the time being (removing the amount of R50 000 from the provisional budget).
- 161.6 The ED and PM are also requested to find a way to raise funds for the purchase of the books on behalf of the institutions ("Transforming Mission" and "African Bible Commentary") – reduction of R8 000
- 161.7 Other reductions: ACTEA assessments (to become R30 000); other scholarship needs (also to become R30 000). If other funds are obtained, both of these items will be restored to the original R40 000.
- 161.8 The Board approves the adjusted budget, though there is still a deficit of R25 000. The approved budget is attached to the minutes.

**NB 162 Loans from RCA**

Ron presents a written explanation and proposal on this issue. His explanation, including the necessary steps to be taken in applying for these loans, is attached to the minutes as the document marked "RCA Loans"

- 162.1 The Board gratefully notes that NetACT is now officially regarded as a Mission Partner to the Reformed Church in America (RCA).
- 162.2 The Board encourages institutions to make use of this provision, but also draws attention to the fact that there are certain due dates for the applications.
- 162.3 The Board once again thanks Dr Hartgerink for his efforts in negotiating this deal.

**NB 163 Amahoro Christian gathering in Uganda**

- 163.1 The Board notes that there will be a conference about missional theology at Kingfisher Safari Resort in Jinja, Uganda, from 7-18 May 2007. The meeting is organised by Brian McLaren and others, and they intend to invite 140 Africans, and 60 people from elsewhere.
- 163.2 The ED affirms he closed a deal with the organisers that NetACT representatives can attend free of charge; we only need to pay for our own transport.
- 163.3 Institutions are strongly encouraged by the Board to send at least one delegate, if possible the principal of the institution.
- 163.4 The NetACT office will provide any further information to all NetACT institutions as soon as it becomes available.

**NB 164 Election of EC members**

The chairman announces that two people have won outright majorities in the nomination process, making it unnecessary to do any further voting. The two delegates to occupy the vacant positions are:

- 164.1 Vice-chairman: Rev Ariko Ekitala (from RITT)
- 164.2 Secretary: Rev Henry Murray (from MTC)

The chairman thanks the outgoing members for their services. He then congratulates the new members on their election, welcomes them on the executive committee and wishes them God's blessing on their service in these capacities. He stresses that the work is not over, but just starting! The chairman makes a special mention of the services rendered by Dr Hartgerink, and calls him (and his wife) American Africans (rather than African Americans).

**NB 165 Position of Prof Hendriks**

The Board considers the proposal prepared by the task group assigned to this duty. The document is first discussed in the presence of Prof Hendriks and then in his absence. After making a few alterations, the Board approves the proposed job description and service contract, to be provisionally signed by the chairman, Prof Elna Mouton (Dean of SU Faculty of Theology) and Prof Hendriks. The document will be attached to the minutes. It is obviously not the final agreement/contract, which will have to be finalised by a South African lawyer, after the inclusion of the necessary employment clauses customary in South Africa.

**NB 166 Contributors to book on Preaching on HIV/AIDS**

The following people are appointed on the committee to help with the book on "A contextual challenge to the Preaching of the Gospel in Africa":

- a) Dr Johan Cilliers (editor)
- b) Ms Edith Chemorion (RITT)
- c) Prof Isabel Phiri (University of KwaZulu Natal)
- d) Prof Dr Musa Dube (Gaborone University, Botswana)
- e) Rev Archwells Katani Mwale (Kaning'a CCAP, Malawi)
- f) Rev Venancio Patreque (Mozambique)
- g) Rev Christo Greyling (World Vision)
- h) Ms Nolipher Moyo (JMTC)

Rev Keith Griffiths and Rev Rachel Mash (proposed by Dr Cilliers) can be co-opted on the committee at their own costs (seeing that they are near Stellenbosch).

## NB 167 Closing prayers

The various institutions are given an opportunity to explain briefly their needs for prayer. After some silent prayer, the outgoing vice-chairman, Dr Saindi Chipangwi, closes the meeting with prayer. The chairman, Dr D T Banda, offers the final benediction.

### Addendum to NetACT August 2006 minutes (see NB 154.2) On Curriculum and Accreditation (NetACT AGM 10, 3 Aug 06)

1. Mr Chairman, sisters and brothers, I thank you for the privilege to be part of the NetACT AGM. I would like to start by reading from **1 Peter 3:1,14a,15**, and by inviting you to consider the whole issue of curriculum and accreditation as an opportunity *to account for the faith and hope* that is within and among us. The moment affords us a golden opportunity to take stock and to give account of the God in whom we believe, the contexts and worldview from within which we interpret, the biblical documents that form the foundation of our faith, and the hope that is within us.

2. Since the early nineties it has become a **worldwide trend** to develop more coherent and coordinated education systems, so as to provide for rapidly changing societal needs – both on local and global levels. Countries that took the lead in this regard were New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. It was followed by similar processes in post-apartheid South Africa, alongside with the development of a new constitution and a far-reaching Bill of Rights. New legislation was formulated, including the *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act* of 1995, which was to oversee the development and implementation of the *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)*.

The NQF was intended “to transform education and training **in South Africa** by creating a single, integrated national education and training framework; by making it easier for learners to enter the system and to move and progress within it; by improving the quality of education and training; and by enabling learners to develop to their full potential, thereby supporting the social and economic development of the country. The NQF is essentially a quality assurance system” (Draft Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education, Jan 2002).

This implies that “we are working within a policy trajectory which aims to build a single, coherent and coordinated Higher Education (HE) system in the long-term; that we work with an outcomes-based model of curriculum design for qualifications and programmes; that we assume that learning achievements can be ‘measured’ in terms of levels and credits on a qualifications framework.”

Subsequently, every aspect and person involved in HE was to be assessed and ‘measured’ in new ways: *qualifications* (according to the NQF, of which the final document is pending); *institutions* (by the HE Quality Committee); and *lecturers* (according to National Research Foundation standards). In the process of developing a NQF, academic disciplines were invited to form SGB’s (Standard Generating Bodies), with a view to advise SAQA on required outcomes and criteria for assessment. Theology was one of the leaders in this regard, and formed a Forum for University Theological Education (FUTE) and a Council for Theological Education (SACTE), which liaised with churches and theological institutions in order to advise the SGB for (Christian) Theology and SAQA regarding requirements for theological education and training in SA in the years to come.

3. The NQF thus was to provide a **framework** within which qualifications were to be ‘measured’ in SA. According to this framework, HE institutions are responsible to

oversee the formation of learners on levels 5-8 (see Addendum 11: NQF level descriptions and standards at NetACT institutions).

After an in-depth HEQC assessment of the Stellenbosch University in Oct 2005, and in continuation with proposed NQF levels and outcomes, it was decided that *two year Masters' degrees* (including a bridging phase) would no longer be on offer at the SU (see NetACT 2006 Agenda 10.1). Instead, candidates in Theology may now register for a *one year Postgraduate Diploma* (NQF 7), followed by a *one year MTh degree* (NQF 8a). The PGD allows for orientation with respect to six theological disciplines (Old and New Testament, Systematic Theology, Ecclesiology, Practical Theology, Missiology), and a specialization component which may serve as prelude to the MTh. (See chapter 5 of Draft Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education, Jan 2002: "Level Descriptors for HE"). The PGD was originally devised as a bridging course for students with a 3 or 4 year Baccalaureus degree who wished to do a MTh, but *with no formal theological training*. (The designation PG *Diploma* however seems to cause uneasiness with candidates *with* a theological background, and may need to be restructured as an Honours degree).

4. This brings me to the (sensitive yet challenging) issue of **Accreditation**. After a thorough consultation process, NetACT institutions were assessed according to NQF/SAQA criteria (see document "NetACT Institutions and their NQF Accreditation Status 28-07-2008"). Consequently, 4 year BTh degrees offered by other institutions in Africa are being rated on NQF level 6, and do no longer allow for direct access into the (2 year) MTh programme.

Even though the Faculty of Theology (at SU, also in consultation with other SA universities) had no choice in this regard, we sincerely wish to empathise with the pain and tension incurred by this decision.

5. **A way forward?** Mr Chairman and colleagues, I would like to invite you collectively to respond in creative and constructive ways to these opportunities. Shall I make some tentative suggestions for further deliberation?
- As a point of departure, it is recommended that NetACT institutions cooperate with local (national) qualifications systems, where applicable, and (even better) with **ACTEA** as general accrediting body for theological education in Africa;
  - A meeting needs to be set up as a matter of urgency between ACTEA, the (SA) NQF and NetACT, so as to deal with discrepancies in policy matters (Revd Kruger du Preez's proposal for his doctoral degree holds great potential in this regard, and certainly needs to be affirmed and supported);
  - I would like to encourage NetACT institutions to **upgrade** existing programmes to NQF level 7 where possible, so as to qualify for direct access into a *one year MTh*. This may be done by filling out the existing template for accreditation, thereby standardising access requirements and other categories and procedures amongst these institutions. The Faculty of Theology in Stellenbosch would gladly like to assist if needed;
  - Theological education in Africa needs to be **decentralised** in terms of institutions and gender;
  - Let us see this (fragile, risky yet challenging) process as part of our **calling** to give account of the faith and hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15), so as to bring about harmony, to be truly liberating and healing, and to glorify God!

I thank you.

Elna Mouton  
Dean, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University  
emouton