

LAYPERSON DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND FORMAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Section Leadership Development and Nurture (SECTION 5)

Preamble

We affirm that:

- All God's people must contribute to building and sustaining the Body of Christ.
- Therefore, Christian development should pay critical attention to life-long learning of all members.
- It is the re-discovery of an old reality and part of our Reformed identity relating to the priesthood of all believers (Ephesians 4.1, 11 and 12).
- Although the different fields of Lay, Youth and Formal Theological Education can be distinguished, these must be considered holistically.
- A basic principle of the field of Leadership Development and Nurture is that "all member churches share these gifts" (Constitution IV, A). Every member church is asked to share as much knowledge and resources as is possible.

We acknowledge that:

- Lay leadership has become increasingly important as demands for pastoral leadership rise. Lay persons have been required to perform at funerals, baptisms and other events and must therefore be appropriately equipped.
- Persons of 30 years and below are "youth".
- The development of the youth ministry in member churches and the proclamation of the Gospel and Reformed identity to the world's youth is of paramount importance.
- The voices of young people must be heard and integrated into the full life, work and programmes of the church.
- This is the mandate of the Section on Youth Empowerment.
- Formal Theological Education is the Education for (future) ministers and pastors.
- The following areas of priority must be considered in relation to Formal Theological Education: curriculum during education, profile of a (Reformed) minister, program after graduation (lifelong learning) and personal coaching and caring after graduation.
- Curriculum contains the following elements: knowledge, attitude, management requirements as well as the organization of the member church (local and global).

Recommendations

We therefore recommend the following:

General

- Development of all persons for church leadership is:
 - a lifelong process,
 - takes place in training and education programs as well as in real life experiences,
 - not only knowledge but also the competency to transform (Reformed) theology and other knowledge to different (post)modern contexts and practices.
- Access to development programs should be equally open to women and men. In leadership development programs there should be a focus on creating a friendly environment for female leadership. The member churches are encouraged to help each other to reach this environment and to learn from and support each other.
- WCRC develops a strong network of knowledge that would be easily accessible to all member churches. To this end, WCRC has to invest in a high-standard, web-based knowledge system.

- Existing development programs of WARC and REC should be critically reviewed prior to continuing these.

Layperson Development

- A curriculum for life-long learning and another for lay worship leaders should be developed and shared within the Communion
- Member churches of the WCRC should:
 - commit meaningful budgetary resources for the empowerment of lay leaders.
 - equip their ministers to provide effective training for lay persons.
 - create supportive environments in which lay persons would be encouraged to develop their gifts and offer themselves and their professional knowledge for ministry in church-run institutions and pastoral care to the congregation and pastors.
 - endeavour to motivate laypersons fairly and equitably including through self-development opportunities, since they often work on a volunteer basis
- The interpretation of “the priesthood of all believers” should be subjected to theological reflection by the WCRC in order to address any conflicts or hierarchies that may have arisen within the different Reformed families.
- WCRC must:
 - clarify who constitute the lay or ordained, given the differences in interpretation between congregations. However, the roles of lay persons must be seen as equally important and supportive of the work of the ordained.
 - should facilitate ecumenical sharing of training resources for the laity through distance education, internet-based learning and networking by lay training centres.
 - should facilitate the development of assessment and accreditation criteria for lay worship leaders to perform a common set of functions.

Youth Development

This Section agreed that youth ministry in the WCRC was of paramount concern. The ministry to, with and by young people is important to ongoing reform, present vitality and future existence. Therefore, to demonstrate vision and forward action, youth ministry should attract high priority of resources. In the interest of Youth Ministry, the LD&N Section would like to make recommendations on four main issues: networking, resourcing, training and fellowshiping.

Networking

- The WCRC:
 - Creates forums for people to connect and share ideas;
 - Fosters communal resource development;
 - Updates database of Youth Ministry Workers;
 - Collaborates with other ecumenical bodies on youth development;
 - Connects with other student and youth movements

Training

- The WCRC supports:
 - Consultant and trainers to visit regions or sub-regions to deliver training and development in Youth Nurture;
 - Regional youth leaders to share training events.

Resourcing

- The WCRC undertakes:
 - The construction of a digital clearing house for curricula and training materials for youth programs, worship resources, Bible studies and vocational skills building,
 - The update of databases of Resource Centre Directors

Fellowshipping

- The WCRC supports:
 - Opportunities to share concerns and stories and visitations of encouragement
 - Face to face meetings of youth leaders: regionally and at assemblies

Moving Forward

- The WCRC:
 - Develops and sustains a working party of skilled volunteers to work towards the above objectives.
 - Appoints a facilitator to dedicate significant time and expertise to the objectives of Youth Empowerment and Nurture by December, 2012.

Formal Theological Education

Every member church has to:

- provide a profile of a (Reformed) minister. Profiles will include the competency of the minister to translate the Reformed theology and Reformed tradition in the local context as well as a sense for diversity in gender, race and ethnicity.
- develop life-long learning programs for ministers working in the church.
- develop coaching and caring programs for ministers working in the church.

The WCRC encourages the member churches:

- To share information on curricula, profiling, lifelong learning programs, coaching and caring on the new-created knowledge network. Focal persons of member churches will maintain regular contact with each other by social media and other technologies, on different levels: country, region, global.
- To share knowledge, books and human resources with other member churches.
- To develop joint theological education facilities in-country and build consortia of seminaries to work together in regions.

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