

Appendix to the Deputies for Students for the Ministry Report

On behalf of the deputies, Rev. Michael Flinn visited the RTC on Tuesday 3rd June, 2008 for the annual visitation. He attended a number of lectures, and conducted interviews with Craig van Echten and the faculty. Craig is still our only full-time ministry student who is training at the RTC, although Rev. Flinn also caught up with Anita van Ameyde (from Bishopdale) and Adele Ford (from Hastings), who are undertaking studies at the College this year. Reports have been sent to Foxton, Bishopdale and Hastings sessions respectively.

The faculty wanted us to be informed about the following:

- **BTH +**
The CRCA at their last synod officially adopted the BTH+ programme, which is a 4 year rather than a 5 year course. The languages and theology will make up most of the BTH and the “+” component of the degree will be the practical theology and the Reformed distinctive subjects. The RTC has been adjusting its programme accordingly from a 5 to a 4 year programme. The College could still offer a 5 year programme if we wanted it, but clearly it would be easier and more streamlined for the RTC to offer the same course for both CRCA and RCNZ students.
- **Home Based Study**
The RTC is still looking into whether part of the programme (2 years) could be offered by extension while the student stayed in his home church. They are looking at a combination of intensives, distance education, cooperation with local Bible Colleges, and field work for evangelism, pastoral care and preaching. The option to be resident at the College for 4 years will, of course, still be offered under this scenario.

In addition, the RTC is exploring a number of other issues. The faculty stressed that they were only investigating these matters, and that nothing had been decided yet. However, they were looking into these things as well:

1. Relationship with local Geelong churches and the ministry they can have to them.
2. Introduction of CERT 4. This is a 1 year course below diploma level and is a “leg up” for someone fresh out of high school.
3. Honours year or MDiv.
4. A different theological model that is fully church based.
5. Staff appointments: A search committee has been appointed for the first appointment. This will commence in 2010. The position will be advertised widely and interviews will take place later next year. The position is for someone in missions and evangelism and some other area of strength.
6. The CRCA have adopted the 4 fold task. This is a strategy for focussing on mission and outreach. It involves Prayer, Multiplication, Training, and Alignment to these priorities. The RTC has taken note of this and wants to cooperate with it.
7. B Min. + diploma geared at mission/evangelism.

Further information on these areas has been helpfully provided in the latest edition of the RTC monthly, which can read in conjunction with this appendix.

The deputies for Students for the Ministry

Further Recommendations

1. *That the deputies be instructed to conduct a review of the requirements of the RCNZ for theological education for the future (with the authority to co-opt others to assist in this review) and report back to the next synod with recommendations. This review is to cover:*
 - a. *The content and type of theological education (ie. practical/equipping, or academic/theological, or what combination of both and how that combination should be weighted)*
 - b. *The delivery of this education (ie. through the RTC, MARS, or to be based more in NZ)*

Grounds

- a. *The RTC is considering changes to its courses and its structure. It would be wise for us to assess these changes, the effect they will have on theological education, and how we should respond to these.*
 - b. *At present we only have one student studying at the RTC. We have had one student train at MARS and another one who has just commenced study there. We believe we should make some assessment of where our students are going, where to send them, and how and where to allocate our financial resources for theological education.*
 - c. *It would be helpful to make an assessment of the possibility and viability of retaining our students in New Zealand for some of their study. This is in line with some of the changes being considered by the RTC.*
2. *That the deputies be instructed to make contact first with the principals and then with students of Greenville Presbyterian Seminary and Mid America Reformed Seminary to determine if there are men currently in training who would be both suited to and interested in serving in the RCNZ. After careful investigation such men would then be placed in a twelve month vicariate in our churches with a view to being made available for call in the RCNZ.*

Grounds

- a. *By the end of this year eight of our churches/home mission posts will be seeking to call a pastor. We will have one vicar in training, and two students training for the ministry. Our short-term and long-term need for pastors is great.*
- b. *In addition to the RTC the two seminaries mentioned above appear to be closest to us in theology and ethos of the various colleges we have much knowledge of.*
- c. *Placing men in a twelve month vicariate allows the man and his family and our churches a time of mutual evaluation before a candidate is examined, called, and ordained.*