

The changes that the NetACT curriculum workshop brought to Murray  
Theological College (MThC)

Presented at ABC, Lilongwe, Malawi on 2011-01-14 by Rev HW Murray

1 Introduction

- The MThC is the theological training institute of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe
- The RCZ Synod consists of about 65 congregations and 11 presbyteries
- The RCZ traces its roots back to 1891 when mission work was started by the SA Dutch Reformed Church in the south-east of Zimbabwe, where the current Morgenster Mission is
- MThC started in 1925 for training evangelists at Morgenster Mission, where it is still situated today
- Since then more than 130 ministers have been trained and licensed for ministry in the RCZ

2 Before (Our eyes were opened by the CD Workshop for the following weaknesses at MThC)

- Lack of Academic Committee
- Academic administration is not up to standard
- No clear job descriptions of principal, vice-principal and academic dean
- No supporting committees for administration, accountancy and technical affairs
- Too many classes given by fulltime lecturers
- Not using temporary lecturers and alumni
- Compulsory passing of all students not conducive to good academic standards
- Lack of fulltime librarian
- No proper credit system
- No Prospectus & Lecturer's Guide & Academic Calendar
- No Internet access
- The strengths and weaknesses of MThC was clearly highlighted, but in a sympathetic way (Presenters noted: *Rome was not built in one day – but it was eventually built!*)
- The curriculum is the “whole race”, the complete package concerning theological training
- To us curriculum was the contents of the course of study
- The curriculum was disjointed and each one did his own thing as best as he / she could
- The CD Workshop was a logical outflow of our 2009 Strategic Planning
- We learned about subject content and curriculum administration of other theological institutions of reformed persuasion in our region
- To have a holistic understanding of the inclusive term of Theological Curriculum

### 3 After

- Academic Committee formed and Academic Dean appointed
- Job descriptions for Principal, vice-Principal and Academic Dean in place, as well as for administrative staff
- Credit system and coding of subjects in place
- Incorporated Veritas and NBI into curriculum, as well as selected material from NETS
- Assessment and evaluation system for lecturers as well as for students is in place
- Study Guide and Prospectus in place – much development still necessary in each of the subjects
- Academic Committee busy evaluating contents of each subject on ongoing basis
- Committees formed for each aspect of curriculum – no-one is ever alone in the tasks that need to be performed

### 4 Way forward

- Progress and growth is a cyclic process – a journey where you need to continually revisit each improvement to ascertain whether it is still delivering the goods
- Contextual understanding of the world in which God places us – otherwise we are irrelevant (sports programme training 400 meter athlete, and then at the sports meeting realising that the competition is a swimming championship!)
- To bring the Board of MThC on board (excuse the pun!)
- To clearly differentiate between the training of evangelists and ministers
- Church ownership non-negotiable for the funding of growth and development of the curriculum
- Professional development of lecturers through in-service-training
- Appointment of full-time qualified librarian
- Full internet access
- Students to be involved in CD
- Moderation of exam papers
- Improve relationship between factual knowledge and comprehension
- Community development to be included in curriculum
- Final year thesis to be introduced
- Regular class visits by Principal and Academic Dean to evaluate lecturers
- Gender equality in all aspects

### 5 Conclusion

- Go for it! CD will change and improve your institution
- Be willing to change and be changed
- It will take much time and energy, you will have to adapt, but you will grow
- CD is like conversion: not a once-off, but a continuous process