

Deputies Article 19 for Needy Students

Report to Synod Mamelodi 2024

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Executive summary

This report deals with the financial support to needy theological students in the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa. We praise the Lord that over the past decade He gave us nine brothers who are at various levels of theological training.

This Deputyship is highly necessary in the FRCSA federation, as the cost of training, both undergraduate and at MDiv level, remains expensive for any student. We thank the Lord that He also abundantly provided the resources for the training, both in South Africa and at the CRTS in Canada.

The contributions from the churches in South Africa clearly show that these churches are grateful to the Lord for providing brothers who want to serve as ministers in His kingdom. Already one student is working in the mission congregation of Soshanguve F4.

We are grateful to the Foreign Students Bursary Fund of our Canadian sister-churches which supports our students in Canada, in terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the CRTS and the Deputies Theological Training of the FRCSA. This MoU largely benefits our students, and therefore us as Deputies Art 19 Needy Students. We are also grateful for the financial support that Deputies Art 19 Needy Students, together with Deputies Theological Training, have received from our sister churches in Australia. Without their support we would not be able to sustain the training.

The theological training trajectory for the FRCSA has been established and is functioning well. We envisage that we continue funding in line with this trajectory for the next 5 to 10 years.

This report should be read together with the Report of Deputies for Theological Training, that provides the background to developments and grounds for funding allocations. Deputies Art 19 made contributions to the report by Deputies for Theological Training.

This report is divided into two sections:

- Synod 2021 instructions and results
- Proposed Synod 2024 instructions

Part One: Synod 2021 instructions and results

1 To separate the deputies on the basis that there should be an independent person attending to the needs of needy students, one who is not a curator.

Synod appointed the following persons as members of the Deputyship Art 19:

- Ernst van Vondel, Chair of Deputyship
- Martha Hamming, member of Deputyship Art 19 as well as Treasurer of Deputies Theological Training.

The two Deputies have been working as an independent Deputyship, that held meetings separately from Deputies Theological Training when needed, and that kept separate financial accounts.

The Deputies Art 19 implemented the following mandates:

1.1 To collaborate closely with Deputies Theological Training in order to determine the level of financial support for theological students.

1.1.1 In principle the separation of the two Deputyships is necessary for clean management and protection of separate mandates. In practice the separation is rather artificial, and if strictly adhered to, time-consuming. Students would submit applications for funding to Deputies Art 19, who then request DTT to advise on eligibility and amounts of funding. DTT then discuss merits and alternatives, as well as consequences, and submit recommendations to Deputies Art 19. If questions arise, Deputies Art 19 would have to request further advice from DTT.

1.1.2 The two Deputyships used the following compromise with regard to cooperation:

- a. DTT received applications for funding from students on a prescribed application form or on an *ad hoc* basis . These applications were discussed at the next DTT meeting to evaluate their merit. Deputies Art 19 attended the meeting and thus remained informed on students' progress when DTT discussed the students. Under the agenda item Finances/Art 19, the student's application was discussed, and a decision was taken by Deputies Art 19. If no decision could be taken at the meeting, Deputies Art 19 met separately in a follow-up meeting. This seldomly happened.
- b. Where an application was urgent, the same process was followed through email communication organised by the DTT administrator or a Teams meeting.

1.1.2 As the financial statements in Addendum A show, funding was allocated to the following needs of students:

- a. Undergraduate studies:
 - Tuition fees, as determined by the educational institution at which the student was enrolled.
 - Books, as prescribed by the educational institution, if and where requested by the student.
 - Transport, for 4 students.
 - Living cost stipends, for 3 students
- b. MDiv studies:

In terms of the MoU with CRTS, the seminary's Foreign Students Bursary Fund paid for all living costs and accommodation in Hamilton, while Deputies Art 19, in cooperation with Deputies Theological Training, paid for travel costs, visa, insurance, tuition costs and books. Deputies also paid for the Toefl test for three students. This test is used to assess the student's ability to master the English language. All students passed this test.

1.2 To levy the churches as follows:

- For 2021: R500 000
- For 2022: R300 000
- For 2023: R300 000
- For 2024: R200 000

Deputies received the following amounts from the churches. We praise the Lord that our brothers and sisters were willing and able to fulfil their obligations:

- For 2021: R493,145
- For 2022: R295,887
- For 2023: R300 965
- For 2024: R200 000 (NB: year not ended)

1.3 Management of funding from our sister-churches abroad in a Biblically responsible way to serve all FRCSA churches

This mandate was not formally determined at Synod 2021 but flows logically from developments in overseas funding of the FRCSA churches between 2021 and 2024.

Deputies Theological Training received the following funding from our Australian sister-churches:

- For 2021: R744,796
- For 2022: R321,819
- For 2023: R1,909,733 (NB: partially for delayed payment in 2022)
- For 2024: R (NB: year not ended)

Our Australian sister-churches have funded Deputies Needy Churches of the FRCSA since the 1990s, particularly for the congregation of Bethal. When Rev Breytenbach accepted a call to Pretoria in 2016 with special tasks in theological training and mission work, the FRCA funds could be used for his costs and additional expenditures, such as his pension fund. Funding by the Australian sister-churches as reported in the Deputies' financial statements, accounted for approximately R700,000 to R900,000 per year. Most of the funding was used for the costs of the training in South Africa, and part of the costs for sending students to CRTS. The latter costs will increase as the number of CRTS students increase. Annual reports and a synod report were submitted to Deputies Churches Abroad of the FRCA.

The Canadian sister-churches have been funding part of the MDiv studies through the Foreign Students Bursary Fund (FSBF). In 2016 the CRTS/FSBF and the Deputies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, in which it was agreed that the FSBF would pay for the accommodation and living costs of South African MDiv students in Canada, while the Deputies would pay for travel costs, visa, medical insurance, tuition fees and book costs. This MoU was updated in 2024, and strengthened the collaboration between CRTS

and the Deputies (Addendum B). Synod Guelph 2022 of the CanRC approved a request from CRTS to be able to raise funds more widely in the Canadian congregations through a Free Will Giving letter. Deputies Theological Training disseminated a similar letter in some of the FRCSA congregations.

At Synod Belhar 2021 Mission Deputies SA raised the issue of possible funding of mission work in South Africa by the Canadian sister-churches. While the latter fund Khothatsong, Canadian government regulations would make it difficult to extend funding to mission work. At the 2021 synod the possibility was then raised whether the FSBF could extend their funding to include all costs of sending FRCSA students to CRTS, so that this would free Australian funding Deputies receive, for use in the mission field. The possibility of an increase in FSBF funding was discussed with CRTS, but this option could not be realised as it would create an unwanted precedence for other foreign students at CRTS.

In view of the need for more funding for Mission Deputies SA, Deputies Theological Training submitted a proposal to the Australian deputies in 2023, for the latter's approval for Deputies Theological Training to forward unused Australian funds to MDSA.

From the above initiatives it is clear that there is a need for more coordination between various FRCSA deputyships and their budgets. It is proposed that at least the Deputies Theological Training, Deputies Needy Students, Deputies Needy Churches and Mission Deputies South Africa strive for better coordination and annual assessment of budgets and funding received, in order to optimise the funding from our sister-churches.

1.4 To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held end 2022 or beginning 2023.

Due to the close working relationship between Deputies Theological Training and Deputies Art 19, their reports were submitted as one report for the Indaba.

1.5 To submit a report to the next Synod and formulate recommendations according to Art 10 and 11 of the Synod Rules.

The current report fulfils this mandate.

Part 2: Proposed Synod 2024 instructions

2.1 To function as an independent deputyship that keeps its own accounts and reports independently to Synod

Grounds: In order to ensure sound financial management and independent decision-making on funds that are made available by the churches for needy students, Deputies Art 19 should formally function as an independent deputyship, which is held accountable in terms of its own mandate.

2.2 To collaborate closely with Deputies Theological Training in order to determine the level of financial support for theological students.

Grounds:

- 2.2.1 As Deputies Theological Training largely manage the training programme and requirements, their decisions impact on any funding that can be allocated to needy students. DTT have an extensive database on students, and manage most of the relevant administration and correspondence.
- 2.2.2 In principle the separation of the two Deputyships is necessary for clean management and protection of separate mandates.
- 2.2.3 In practice the separation is rather artificial, and if strictly adhered to, time-consuming. The two Deputyships can apply the following compromise with regard to cooperation:
 - a. DTT's administration receives applications for funding from students. These applications are discussed at the next DTT meeting. Deputies Art 19 attend the meeting and thus remain informed on students' progress when DTT discuss the students. Under the agenda item Finances/Art 19, the student's application is discussed, and a decision is taken by Deputies Art 19. If no decision can be taken at the meeting, Deputies Art 19 meet separately in a follow-up meeting.
 - b. Where an application is urgent, the same process is followed through email or a Teams meeting.
- 2.2.4 Synod 2024 appoints the Treasurer of DTT also as a Deputy Art 19 to ensure efficient cooperation. The Treasurer keeps separate financial accounts and books for both Deputyships.

2.3 To manage funding from our sister-churches abroad in a Biblically responsible way to serve the churches

Grounds:

- 2.2.1 DTT receive an average of R900,000 per year from the Australian sister-churches. This is sufficient for the costs of both Deputies Theological Training and Deputies Art 19. From 2024 onwards the R900 000 will be transferred to the Deputies Art 19 account, as funding for Deputies Theological Training from the FRCSA is sufficient. In future the number of students may decline, which impacts on the financial needs of both Deputyships.
- 2.2.2 When the financial needs of Deputies Art 19 result in a medium-term surplus on their budgets, surplus funds should be shared with other deputyships, particularly Mission Deputies SA and Deputies Needy Churches.
- 2.2.3 A request has been submitted to the FRCA Synod 2024 to approve our intent to share surplus funds with other deputyships.
- 2.2.4 From the above initiatives it is clear that there is a need for more coordination between various FRCSA deputyships and their budgets. It is proposed that at least the Deputies Theological Training, Deputies Needy Students, Deputies Needy Churches and Mission Deputies South Africa strive for better coordination and annual assessment of budgets and funding received, in order to optimise the funding from our sister-churches.

2.4 To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.

Ground:

The three-year timespan between synods may cover significant developments in the churches. To ensure that all Deputies and churches are informed about these developments, halfway the three-year period an Indaba will be held, at which Deputies present an interim report on their activities.

2.5 To submit a full report to Synod 2027

Ground: This submission is in accordance with Synod Rules.

Addendum A: Financial Statements 2020-23

Needy Students (Art 19)

Income and expenses for the period 01.01.2023 until 31.12.2023

	2023	Budget - 2023	2022	2021	2020
Total Income	600 965	300 000	345 888	593 145	304 701
DVN (Netherlands)	-	-	50 000	100 000	70 000
FRCA	300 000				
Income from churches	300 965	300 000	295 888	493 145	234 701
Expenses	550 885	622 200	636 894	441 461	419 645
Student stipends:	130 000	150 000	204 000	176 398	227 112
Albert Bijker	125 000	150 000	-	-	-
Rofhiwa Ramphabana	-	-	64 000	63 408	95 112
Jakob Mars	5 000	-	140 000	112 990	132 000
Study cost:	257 087	200 000	135 516	146 305	171 984
Jacob Mnisi	-	-	-	-	-
Rofhiwa Ramphabana	-	-	-	17 231	45 284
Albert Bijker	35 392	-	-	-	-
Jakob Mars	47 233	40 000	31 217	30 669	42 932
Arjan van der Meer	55 614	40 000	37 082	35 636	25 273
Jonatan Boon	55 106	40 000	33 924	18 386	32 285
Marco van Renssen	63 742	40 000	33 294	-	26 210
Arco Klapwijk	-	40 000	-	44 382	-
Travel cost:	163 799	270 000	295 277	117 678	18 747
Albert Bijker	-	-	-	-	-
Jakob Mars	112 528	105 000	125 579	6 500	6 124
Rofhiwa Ramphabana	-	-	-	111 178	11 423
Arjan van der Meer	12 100	55 000	53 403	-	1 200
Jonatan Boon	13 976	55 000	57 680	-	-
Marco van Renssen	25 196	55 000	58 615	-	-
Johann Snijder	-	-	-	-	-
Bank charges	-	2 200	2 101	1 080	1 802
Surplus / (shortage)	50 080	-322 200	-291 007	151 684	-114 944
01.01. Opening Balance Bank Account	97 277	97 277	388 284	236 599	351 543
31.12. Closing Balance Bank Account	147 356	-224 923	97 277	388 284	236 599

Addendum B: Budgets 2024-27

Needy Students (Art 19) Budget - 2022 to 2025

		In South African Rands			
	Notes	Budget - 2024	Budget - 2025	Budget - 2026	Budget - 2027
Total Income		1 100 000	1 300 000	1 300 000	1 300 000
Income from FRCA (Australia)		900 000	900 000	900 000	900 000
Income from churches		200 000	400 000	400 000	400 000
Expenses		1 354 572	1 151 407	904 877	980 091
Student stipends:		603 960	342 638	331 932	346 869
Jakob Mars		-	-	-	-
Albert Bijker		300 000	25 000	-	-
Christopher Hlongwane		1 500	1 568	1 638	1 712
Sibusiso Sithole		1 500	1 568	1 638	1 712
Possible students	1	300 960	314 503	328 656	343 445
Study cost:		352 940	410 175	348 389	407 660
Jakob Mars		-	-	-	-
Arjan van der Meer		40 000	40 000	-	-
Jonatan Boon		40 000	40 000	-	-
Marco van Renssen		40 000	40 000	-	-
Johann Snijder		-	-	-	-
Albert Bijker		40 000	40 000	40 000	40 000
Arco Klapwijk		40 000	40 000	40 000	40 000
Christopher Hlongwane	3	76 470	82 588	89 195	96 330
Sibusiso Sithole	3	76 470	82 588	89 195	96 330
Possible students	1	-	45 000	90 000	135 000
Travel cost:		325 472	326 393	152 356	153 362
Albert Bijker		85 000	85 000	85 000	85 000
Jakob Mars		-	-	-	-
Arco Klapwijk		45 000	45 000	45 000	45 000
Arjan van der Meer		85 000	85 000	-	-
Jonatan Boon		45 000	45 000	-	-
Marco van Renssen		45 000	45 000	-	-
Christopher Hlongwane		10 236	10 697	11 178	11 681
Sibusiso Sithole		10 236	10 697	11 178	11 681
Possible students		-	-	-	-
Medical insurance:		70 000	70 000	70 000	70 000
Jakob Mars		-	-	-	-
Arco Klapwijk		10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000
Arjan van der Meer		20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000
Jonatan Boon		10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000
Marco van Renssen		10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000
Albert Bijker		20 000	20 000	20 000	20 000
Christopher Hlongwane		-	-	-	-
Sibusiso Sithole		-	-	-	-
Possible students		-	-	-	-
Bank charges		200	200	200	200
Other charges		2 000	2 000	2 000	2 000
Surplus / (shortage)		-254 572	148 593	395 123	319 909
Opening Balance Bank Account		-152 644	-407 216	-258 622	136 500
Closing Balance Bank Account		-407 216	-258 622	136 500	456 409
Cost incurred in Canada	2	575 000	575 000	280 000	280 000
Remaining surplus / (shortage)		320 428	723 593	675 123	599 909

Notes

- Two possible students from 2023 onwards from our mission churches and another two from 2024 onwards.
- This excludes cost currently covered by the FSBF for our students studying at CRTS i.e. living costs in Canada. Interms of our MOU with CRTS and the Foreign bursary fund these costs are covered by our sister churches in Canada as these costs will be
- Study costs for these 2 students include meals and accommodation at MTC

SA Mdiv - R20 000 per year

CRTS - Study cost R40 000 + Books etc R5000 and Travel R40 000 (twice to Canada) per year + TOEFL exam R3 000 + Medical examination + R20 000

Local University - R40 000 per year

Medical insurance R10 000 per year

Addendum C: Memorandum of Understanding between CRTS and Deputies Theological Training of the FRCSA

Refer to document: "Add to Dep Art 19 CO"