

## 21.5 DEPUTIES TRANSLATION OF DOCTRINAL CREEDS, FORMULARIES AND PRAYER (Artt 93, 94, 203, 326, 327)

- A. Prof PH Fick delivers the Report.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to Commission Doctrinal Matters 2.
- C. Rev L du P van der Vyver reports on behalf of Commission Doctrinal Matters 2.

### D. REPORT

#### LITURGICAL FORMULARIES

(Revised translations - forwarded to churches for evaluation)

#### FORMULARY FOR THE ADMINISTERING OF THE HOLY BAPTISM TO INFANTS

The main aspects pertaining to the doctrine of the holy baptism are contained in the following three points:

##### Sin

Firstly: We, as well as our children, are received and born in sin (Ps 51:5). For this reason we are under the wrath and judgement of God. We shall not enter God's kingdom<sup>1</sup> unless we are born again<sup>2</sup>. This is being taught to us by the immersion and the sprinkling with water, by means of which the impurity of our souls is signified, so that we are instructed to acknowledge contempt for ourselves, to humble ourselves before God and to seek our purification and salvation beyond our own selves.

##### Redemption

Secondly: The holy baptism declares to us and seals the washing away of sins by Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>. For this reason we are baptised into the Name of God: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit<sup>4</sup>.

For if we are baptised in the Name of the Father, God the Father declares to us and seals that He has ratified an eternal covenant of grace with us<sup>5</sup>, that He adopts us as his children and heirs and that He therefore wants to care for us with all that is good and wants to protect us from all that is evil or ordain it to our benefit.

And when we are baptised in the Name of the Son, the Son seals with us that He washes us clean of sin in his blood. By doing so He allows us to enter into the communion and fellowship of his death and resurrection. This He does so that we can be set free from our sins and be judged by God as righteous.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, when we are baptised in the Name of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit assures us in this holy sacrament that He wants to live within us and desires to make of us holy members belonging to Christ<sup>7</sup>. This He does by granting us ownership of what we have in Christ, namely to be purified from sin and to share in daily renewal of our lives, until eventually we shall be placed as unblemished within the community of the elect in eternal life<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 3:9, 19; Romans 5:12-21.

<sup>2</sup> John 3:3.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:11.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:19.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 17:7, Galatians 4:6-7.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13.

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:9, 15, 16.

## Gratitude

Thirdly: All covenants include two parts and represent two sides, therefore God once again by means of the baptism reminds and educates and forces us, the human beings, to have renewed obedience<sup>9</sup>. We must devote ourselves to this only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and we must trust and love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength<sup>10</sup>. We must abandon the world, put to death our old nature and start a life anew as new beings in Christ and in total dedication to God. And if we do sometimes lapse into sin because of our weakness, we should never doubt God's grace or despair and remain lying down in our weakness and sinful ways. Indeed, the baptism is the undoubted seal and proclamation that we are engaged in an everlasting covenant with our faithful God and we are grateful that it is so.

## Infant Baptism

Even though our children do not understand these things, they may still not for such reasons be excluded from the baptism, since they unknowingly are part of Adam's condemnation but are also without their knowledge unaware that in Christ they can be saved and adopted in grace and receive God's favour. Even so does God speak to Abraham, the father of all believers, and therefore also to us and our children, when He says: *I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you*<sup>11</sup>. This Peter also testifies with these words: *The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call*<sup>12</sup>. Therefore God, in the time of the old covenant, commanded that children receive the sign of circumcision to signify the covenant and the justness of faith; likewise Christ himself also took little children up in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them<sup>13</sup>.

As circumcision has been substituted for baptism, our children have to be baptised in the covenant as heirs to the kingdom and covenant of God<sup>14</sup>. And the parents are in duty bound and compelled to instruct and inform their up growing children about these truths<sup>15</sup>.

To perform this holy institution and sacrament of God to his honour, to our comfort and reassurance, and to the reinforcement and progress of the congregation, we shall now call on his holy Name in prayer:

## Prayer

O Almighty, eternal God,

According to your just and fair judgement you punished the unfaithful people of the world that showed no repentance for their sins by destroying them with the flood, saving and keeping only Noah and his family – a mere eight people – because of your great mercy and compassion; you drowned Pharaoh and all his followers in the Red Sea, but safely took through your people, the Israelites, along a dry passage created by You – and through this the baptism is signified<sup>16</sup>.

We do pray that You, in your **unending [groundless]** loving kindness and compassion, will have pity on this child/these children and bestow on him/her/them membership in your kingdom through the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ, so that he/she/they may be buried with

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<sup>9</sup> Romans 12:1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 22:37-40.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 17:7.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 2:39.

<sup>13</sup> Mark 10:16.

<sup>14</sup> Colossians 2:11-12.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 78:3-4, Ephesians 6:4.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Peter 3:20-21.

Christ in death and be resurrected with Him in a new life<sup>17</sup>. We pray, Lord, that he/she/they be equipped to take up his/her/their cross in cheerful obedience,<sup>18</sup> while following and worshipping Christ each day in sincere faith, steadfast hope and intense love;<sup>19</sup> and that you lead him/her/them to follow Christ in this life, that is nothing but an ongoing dying, and that he/she/they may take leave of this life in your comfort and care and on the last day appear fearlessly and without anxiety before the judgement-seat of Christ, your Son.

This we pray through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, that lives and rules to eternity with You and the Holy Spirit as the one God and the only God. Amen.

**The parents must now reply to the following questions:**

Beloved in Jesus Christ, you have heard that the baptism has been instituted by God to seal his covenant with us and our children. We must therefore be part of this baptism with that in mind, and not perform it for reasons of habit or superstition. To make clear that such is your attitude and approach, you on your part must in all sincerity reply to the following questions:

Firstly: Even though our children are received and born in sin, and are therefore subjected to affliction and wretchedness, yes even to condemnation itself, do you notwithstanding confess that they have been made sacred in Jesus Christ and that they therefore should be baptised into his congregation as members?

Secondly: Do you confess that the teachings of doctrine contained in the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Articles of the Christian faith, and that are being taught in this here church, are the true and complete teachings of salvation?

Thirdly: Do you promise and are you of the intention to instruct and teach, as well as assist with instruction and teaching, this here child/ these here children, whose parent/parents you are, to the best of your ability as soon as he/she/they will be ready for such teaching and instruction? **[cause to be instructed, to instruct and to help instruct?]**

*Reply: Yes*

*Next, in administering the sacrament, the minister says the following:*

**Baptism**

(*Name*), I baptise you into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Baptismal Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Almighty and gracious God and Father, You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ; You have adopted us through your Holy Spirit as part of the body of your only Son and therefore as your children; You have confirmed and sealed all of these with the baptism - and we thank You for doing so.

We do also pray, through Him, your beloved Son, that you will at all times govern and sustain this child/ these children in the Holy Spirit. Will You do so, Lord, so that he/she/they as Christians may be instructed and educated and encouraged to live in total devotion to You, and may grow and develop in the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup> Allow him/her/them, Lord, to experience and proclaim the fatherly grace and compassion with which You have blessed him/her/them and all of us; and to live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King and High Priest Jesus Christ; and to combat sin, the devil and all his dominion very courageously

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<sup>17</sup> Romans 6:4 ev.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 16:24.

<sup>19</sup> 1 John 4:18.

<sup>20</sup> Ephesians 4:16-17.

so as to succeed as conquerors.<sup>21</sup> Please grant, Father, that he/she/they will serve and praise You and your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the only true God, faithfully and for ever more. Amen.

## **FORMULARY FOR CELEBRATING THE HOLY SUPPER OF THE LORD**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

### **Institution**

Listen to the words of institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ as described by the apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians.<sup>22</sup>

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

To be able now to take part of the Lord's supper to our own comfort and reassurance, it would first be necessary to examine our inner selves and in the second place we should remember to take part for the purpose to which the Lord Christ has ordained the sacrament, namely in remembrance of Him.

### **Self-examination**

The true self-examination includes the following main aspects:

Firstly: We must think, each one personally, about our sin and damnation and must do so in contempt of the self in order to humble ourselves in repentance before God, because God's wrath on sin is so great that He would not let it pass without it being punished, and rather than leaving it unpunished He punished it through the bitter and shameful sacrifice and death of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Secondly: Let us examine our hearts, each one individually, and make certain that we believe God's unchanging promise that our sins are forgiven only because of Jesus Christ's suffering and death, and make certain also that we believe the perfect righteousness of Christ has been granted each of us to have as our own in absolute completeness, as if each one himself/herself had personally paid for his/her sins to obtain righteousness.

Thirdly: Each one must search his/her conscience to determine whether he/she resolves to live a life fully dedicated to God in true gratitude and sincerity; and furthermore to determine whether we honestly and seriously resolve to put aside enmity, hatred and ill will so as to reconcile with our neighbours and henceforth to live alongside them in true love and peace.

All those who harbour such an attitude will certainly be accepted by God in his mercy as worthy table companions of his Son, Jesus Christ. But those who, on the other hand, do not perceive such testimony in their hearts, would eat and drink judgement on themselves. According to the command by Christ as well as the apostle Paul, we then also admonish all

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<sup>21</sup> Ephesians 6:10-13.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

those who know that they are contaminated by the following repulsive sins, and warn them to abstain from joining the Lord's table, while also pointing out that in this way they can have no part in the kingdom of Christ : all those who worship idols; all those who worship deceased saints or angels or other created creatures or things; those who honour images of people or objects; all magicians and fortune-tellers that cast a spell on animals, people or other things and those who believe in such powers; all those who despise and endeavour to refute God or his Word or holy sacraments; all blasphemers; all those who cause or initiate division, or unwanted groupings and disharmony in church and the state; all those who swear falsely and give false testimony<sup>23</sup> and are disobedient to parents and authorities; all murderers and ill-meaning trouble-makers and those who live in hatred and enmity with their neighbours [Matt 5:43 and on]; all those who commit adultery and who are immoral or drunkards, thieves, unlawful profiteers, robbers, gamblers, guilty of greed, slanderers, [compare 1 Cor 5:11] and all those who live a despicable and ungodly life.<sup>24</sup> All of them must, for as long as they persevere in such sins, refrain from participating in the celebration of the Supper of the Lord, instituted by Christ for his believers to prevent their judgement and condemnation from becoming an even more pressing burden.

But beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, the intention with this solemn warning is not to dishearten believers, not as if only those exceptions who are without sin may join in the Lord's Supper and nobody else. Also we do not attend the celebration of the Lord's Supper to indicate that we are perfect and righteous; on the contrary, since we indeed search for our lives beyond ourselves and within Christ, we acknowledge that we depend on His life-giving power, since otherwise we are amidst the dead as far as God's kingdom is concerned. It is true that we do find in ourselves wretchedness and shortcomings, namely that our faith is not perfect; that we do not serve God as devotedly or enthusiastically as we should; that each day we have to struggle with weakness of our faith and the evil desires of our flesh. If we should, however, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, wholeheartedly repent about such imperfections and desire to defeat our infirmness in faith and live according to God's commandments, we shall be convinced that no sin or weakness remaining within us against our will, will prevent God from accepting us in grace or deeming us worthy of coming to the table of the holy Supper of the Lord.

### **Remembrance**

Let us now continue by considering to what purpose the Lord has instituted his supper, it being, as He ordained, to remember Him when we eat the bread and drink the cup. To do so in remembrance of Him would include the following:

Fundamentally, to begin with, we have to believe with all our heart that the Lord Jesus Christ had been sent into the world by God the Father, that is, according to the promises made to our ancestors in the Old Testament from the beginning; we have to believe that He took upon himself our flesh and blood and that He bore the wrath of God that would have condemned us for ever had He not done so, and that this He did from the beginning of his life in flesh and blood on earth until the end of it; we have to believe that He acted in righteousness and in full obedience to the laws of God when He took up this burden for our sake, especially also when our sins and God's wrath weighed so heavily on Him that He sweated blood in the garden [of Gethsemane]<sup>25</sup>, where he was tied up for the sake of untying us so that we may live through Him; following this He also suffered incredible contempt [Isa 53:3] and was despised and rejected so that we ourselves would never more suffer similar contempt and rejection; we must believe that He was innocent when they condemned Him to death, which He accepted so that we may stand in the presence of God's judgement as beings pardoned from our transgressions; yes, we indeed have to believe that

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<sup>23</sup> Leviticus 19:12.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:11, Ephesians 5:5, Exodus 20:12-17, Zachariah 8:17.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 22:44.

He allowed His sacred body to be nailed to the cross so that our letter of guilt and sin<sup>26</sup> could also be nailed there to the cross, and that He surely in this way carried the burden of our sins and condemnation so that He could bestow His blessings on us in abundance; we must believe that He in body and soul, upon the wooden cross, humiliated himself into the uttermost depths of the malignity, abuse and terror of hell as he called out aloud: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*<sup>27</sup> - so that we would be adopted by God and never more be forsaken by Him; we must believe that He confirmed and sealed for ever God's sacred and gracious covenant of reconciliation, with His death and the shedding of His blood, when He said : *It is finished.*<sup>28</sup>

To believe in all certainty that we are part of this Covenant of Grace we are reminded of Jesus Christ's institution of the sacrament, when *He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me"* [Luke 22:19 NIV], - and in the same way after the supper - *He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* [Matt 26: 27, 28 KJ]. In other words, for as often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, doing so will be a constant reminder, guarantee and encouragement to confirm this heart-felt love and faithfulness that I have for you. This is illustrated by My giving of My body to you on the cross and My shedding of My blood for you, who would otherwise have died the eternal death, to feed and satisfy your hunger and thirst towards eternal life with My crucified body and My shed blood. You are assured of this by the bread that is broken in your presence for all to see and the cup that is handed to each one of you and the fact that you eat and drink with your mouths to My remembrance<sup>29</sup> [Belgic Confession, art 35].

By this ordination of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ it is revealed, for us to take note of, that He leads our faith and trust towards his complete sacrifice. His sacrifice upon the cross to break the power of sin and condemnation was once and final and ever sufficient, and it continues to serve as the only foundation for our salvation. By his complete sacrifice He turned into the Provider of the true food and drink of the eternal life for our hungry and thirsty hearts. By his death He indeed took away the cause of our yearning and concern, namely sin. He obtained the life-giving Spirit for us, so that it would eventually be possible for us through the Spirit – that abides within Christ as the Head and us as the members (limbs) - to have true communion and unity with Him and to share in all the benefits and blessings of his sacrifice, eternal life, righteousness, glory and peace.

Furthermore the same Spirit [of Christ] also unites us with one another in the love of fellowship as members (limbs) of one body. The apostle describes it appropriately by saying: *For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread*<sup>30</sup>. In the same way as many grains of wheat are ground to produce flour to become part of one loaf of bread, and in the same way as many grapes are crushed to bring forth juice that would flow together and mix for one wine to be produced, all of us who belong to Christ in faith must also be one body. As such a body united by our faith in Christ we must demonstrate our love not only in word but also in deed to one another for the sake of our beloved Saviour who loved us first.

May the almighty and gracious God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ through his Holy Spirit help us to accomplish that which He would approve of. Amen.

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<sup>26</sup> Colossians 2:14.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:2.

<sup>28</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:17.

Let us now in true faith ask God mercifully to assist us, and humble ourselves before Him in prayer:

### **Prayer**

Gracious God and Father,

As we are assembled here to partake of this communion supper of the Lord we remember the wonderful event of the bitter death of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We plead with You God to help us through your Holy Spirit working in our very hearts that we may yield ourselves to your Son in sincere faith and trust, and increasingly desire to do so. May it please You, God, to do this for us so that our suppressed hearts may be lifted up and satisfied by the nourishment we receive from His crucified body and poured-out blood, yes, from the really true God that simultaneously existed as human being, the only heavenly bread, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and so that we may live a life which is no longer enslaved by sin, but instead a life that speaks of Him living within us and us within Him. Allow us in this manner to become actually part of the new and everlasting testament and covenant of grace, so that we shall not doubt the wonderful power of your loving and lasting forgiveness and shall gain in certainty of your being our gracious Father for ever more to take care of all our bodily and spiritual needs as your beloved children and heirs.

We need your mercy, God, to keep and sustain us while we take up our cross amidst the troubles and sorrows of this life, denying ourselves and praising You our Saviour who comforts and encourages us, and while we live in hope of the glorious coming from heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall then unite our mortal body with his blessed and divine body to take us with Him into eternity. Hear us in your loving kindness our God and Father, through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray as we shall now pray:

*Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your Name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the  
power and the glory forever.<sup>31</sup>  
Amen.*

*Next the minister of the Word says:*

### **Dedication**

To receive the nourishment of the true heavenly bread, Christ, we must not cling to the concrete signs of bread and wine only, but for the nourishment of our inner beings must surely also lift up our hearts to heaven, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty from where He acts as our heavenly Advocate [1 John 2:1]. To the same our awareness is also alerted by the Articles of our Christian Faith. Let us, moreover, never doubt the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that likewise feeds and nourishes us in the body and blood of Jesus Christ as when we receive the bread and wine to his remembrance. [HC, Sun 28, Q 75].

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 6:9-13.

*As the bread is being broken the minister says:*

The bread that we are breaking is the communion with the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

*As the cup is being passed on, the minister says:*

The cup of thanksgiving for which we thank God, is the communion with the blood of Christ [1 Cor 10:16]. Take, drink from it all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

*When all members have been served, the minister says:*

### **Exaltation**

Beloved in the Lord, as the Lord has now nurtured our souls at the table, we shall all glorify his Name with thanksgiving and repeat these words in our hearts:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy Name! Bless the LORD O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.<sup>32</sup>*

He did not even spare his own Son, but in mercy gave Him to all of us as a gift.<sup>33</sup> God has already revealed and proved his love for us in that Christ died for us while we were still sinners, and much more than He shall save us from his wrath now that we have been justified in Christ's blood. Even while we were still enemies God allowed for us to be reconciled to Him through his Son's death, how much more likely are we to be saved through his Son's life now that we live as reconciled beings within the living Son of God.<sup>34</sup> Surely I have reason to rejoice in God and my mouth and heart shall praise the glory of God now and for ever more. Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

O gracious God and Father, we thank You with all our heart for your unspeakable loving kindness through which You gave your only Son to us as a gift to be a Mediator and an offering for our sins, to be food and drink to us towards an eternal life. We thank You for providing us with true faith so that we may share in all these deeds of kindness, and for instituting and ordaining the holy Supper of the Lord to increase our faith and make it stronger. We pray, faithful God and Father, that your Holy Spirit will establish in us the blessing of this remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of his death, so that our daily progress in proper faith and in blessed fellowship with Christ may advance from strength to strength. This we pray in his Name, your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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<sup>32</sup> Matthew 6:9-13.

<sup>33</sup> Romans 8:32.

<sup>34</sup> Romans 5:8-10.

## **SHORTER VERSION OF THE FORMULARY FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY SUPPER OF THE LORD**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ

### **Institution**

Listen to the words of institution of the Holy Supper of the Lord Jesus Christ as Paul describes it:

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

To celebrate the Supper of the Lord correctly and to our comfort and reassurance and in remembrance of Him, it would be necessary to conduct a self-examination beforehand.

### **Self-examination**

A proper self-examination would include the following three main points:

Firstly: We must consider our sin and damnation and humble ourselves before God in earnest repentance.

Secondly: We must believe the firm and steadfast promise of God that our sins are forgiven purely because our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross died for our sins and His perfect and complete righteousness has been granted and given to us.

Thirdly: We must experience a sincere desire to devote our lives altogether in great thankfulness to God, and to walk with Him in true love and to live in peaceful fellowship and love with our neighbour.

God, as a God of mercy and compassion, wants to adopt those who reveal such an attitude and He wants to let them share in the blessings of the Lord's Supper. However, those who stubbornly continue with an ungodly life, transgressing the laws of God, and who refuse to show repentance, will eat and drink judgement on themselves. There are such people among us and we must, therefore, inform them not to partake of the Lord's Supper if they persist in being idol worshippers, magicians and fortune tellers as well as those who believe in them, blasphemers, ill-intentioned dividers of churches and state, traitors that commit high treason, disobedient subjects, murderers, trouble-makers, those who commit adultery and those who are immoral in their ways, drunkards, thieves, robbers, gamblers and those filled with greed. Nobody that lives a loveless and despicable life forms part of Christ's kingdom. We do, however, not join in the Lord's Supper because we think we are blameless, without sin or perfect; on the contrary, we do indeed come to the Supper because we are in search and need of a life beyond ourselves and within Christ. Accordingly we admit that we are regarded as dead within sin. We do still have many imperfections and shortcomings: weak links in the chain of our faith, insufficient diligence and enthusiasm as worshippers of God, inadequate love for God and our neighbour. But we do have the power of the Holy Spirit working in us so that we may wholeheartedly show repentance for our sins and sincerely desire to live according to all of God's commandments. We can, therefore, be certain that

God accepts us in mercy and would consider us as members worthy of sharing in the heavenly food and drink.

### **Remembrance**

The Lord instructs us about the purpose of the Lord's Supper when He says: *Do this in remembrance of Me*. To be able to do so we have to believe that He was sent into the world by the Father, that He took on a human body of flesh and blood and that He acted as innocent Lamb by carrying, in our stead, God's wrath for our sin on Him throughout his life on earth. In perfect obedience He fulfilled God's law so that we could be blessed. He was despised so that we would never more be despised. He was innocent, but was nevertheless condemned to death and He accepted it and suffered it so that we may be pardoned in the judgement of God. He was nailed to the cross so that our letter of guilt could be nailed to the cross with Him. In this way He took upon Himself the condemnation meant for us and thus made it possible for us to share in the abundance of His blessings. He suffered major pain and extreme abandonment when He anxiously called out: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*<sup>35</sup> and endured this suffering so that we may never more be abandoned by God. Then He died and by so ending His life on earth and with this His death and the shedding of His blood, He fulfilled the everlasting Covenant of Grace, His last words on the cross being: *It is finished!*<sup>36</sup>

When we think of Jesus Christ in this way, the signs of bread and wine reassure us over and again that He had given Himself up in our stead and that He surely feeds us with his body and his blood every time that we eat the bread and drink the wine. In this way the living Christ assures us through his Spirit of his faithful love for us. We are then also brought to the certain knowledge that we too are included in the covenant of grace. The celebration of the Lord's Supper furthermore causes us to look forward to the celebration of the wedding feast on the coming of the Lamb.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice upon the cross to break the power of sin and condemnation was once and complete and ever sufficient, and it continues to serve as the only foundation for our salvation. The Supper of the Lord reminds us of this life-giving truth and teaches us to embrace it as a blessing and a privilege. His body was broken and His blood was poured out and He became the provider of the food and drink we need to enter eternal life. Through his death he secured the life-reviving Spirit for us, the Spirit that binds us to Christ in full fellowship and makes it possible for us to share in his riches of blessings. The same Spirit also unites us as parts of one body and allows for the members to live together in love. Because all of us share the same bread, we are bound together as one body. For this reason all those who have been tied in with Christ's body, must show and practise such unity in love among them, doing so in word and in deed. May God Almighty through his Spirit assist us and strengthen us. Amen.

### **Prayer**

Let us humble ourselves before God and in faith call upon Him to remember us in his great mercy: Gracious God and Father

We thank you that we may remember the comforting and reassuring event of the bitter death of your Son, Jesus Christ. God we pray that your Holy Spirit will work in our hearts so that our desire to have true fellowship with your Son in sincere faith, may grow stronger and stronger. We pray this so that we may be nourished through Him, the heavenly bread, and so that we shall live in Him instead of in sin. Help us to deny ourselves and to testify for our Saviour as we eagerly await his coming again to gather us into eternal life with Him. Listen to our prayer and accept it o God and merciful Father, in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>35</sup> Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:2.

<sup>36</sup> John 19:30.

*An appropriate psalm follows next. The minister goes to the table and says:*

### **Dedication**

Lift up your hearts to Jesus Christ, our Advocate sitting at the right hand of God our heavenly Father, and be assured that the Holy Spirit strengthens you with the body and blood of Jesus as certainly and surely as you receive these signs of bread and wine in his remembrance.

### **Formula**

The bread that we break is the communion with the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that Christ's body was broken to make our redemption from sin complete. The cup of thanksgiving for which we thank God, is the communion with the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out to make our redemption from sin complete.

### **Exaltation**

Beloved, as God has fed us with the heavenly bread at his table, let us all in gratitude praise his Name and repeat these words in our hearts:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy Name! Bless the LORD O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.<sup>37</sup>*

We shall therefore with our mouth and with our heart proclaim God's glory now and forever more. Amen

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Gracious God and Father

We thank and glorify You with all our heart for your wonderful promises of the Gospel that You confirmed with us through this holy communion. We thank You for your unspeakable loving kindness through which You gave your only Son to us as a gift to be a Mediator and an offering for our sins. We thank You for providing us with true faith so that we may share in the sacrifice of your Son. We pray, faithful God and Father, that your Holy Spirit will establish in us the blessing of this remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of his death, so that our daily progress in proper faith and in blessed fellowship with Christ may advance from strength to strength. This we pray in his Name, your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **E. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

### **1. Matters for the Synod's information**

#### *1.1 Instruction*

1.1.1 The instruction relates to 20.19 of the Acta, Synod 2006:572-4:

1.1.1.1 "The instructions are to be continued, as the deputies have requested, and that the same deputies should be appointed to complete the task."

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<sup>37</sup> Psalm 103:1-4, 8-13.

- 1.1.1.2 “The presentation also has the benefit that it can be used as sample translations during Sunday services. When applied this way, the congregation must be made aware that it is a sample translation and that they are to offer feedback on its clarity.”
- 1.1.1.3 “The deputies will undertake the circulation of sample translations and setting a deadline for feedback themselves, in cooperation with the Admin. Bureau.”
- 1.1.2 The instruction also relates to the (interdenominational) project of translating the Confessions into Afrikaans again (Acta 2003:762, 11.3).

## 1.2 *Execution of instruction*

### 1.2.1 Translation of Confessions

- 1.2.1.1 It was decided at the 26 May 2004 meeting that the Faculty of Theology of the University of the Free State act as host to administrate this project, provide access to the latest source text research and eventually set out their publication structure.
- 1.2.1.2 An editorial committee was appointed for the translation, comprising: Prof. Sybrand Strauss and Frits Gaum (NGK); Prof. Johan Buitendag and Dr. Kobus Labuschagné (NHK); Dr. Victor d’Assonville and Prof. Rikus Fick (GKSA).
- 1.2.1.3 There are, however, also individuals who initially participated in the project on behalf of the NG Kerk and Ned. Hervormde Kerk who could no longer take part in the project, due to retirement or for other reasons. This resulted in a delay to its completion. Aside from the Ned. Ned Hervormde Kerk that still needs to appoint new representatives, all the other churches confirmed their continued participation on the project.
- 1.2.1.4 As already mentioned, the secretariat of this project is housed at the Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State. Prof. R.M. Britz of the Faculty confirmed that the project is still underway, but some translations of the ecumenical confessions are ready for review.

### 1.2.2 Translation of the Liturgical Formularies, the Formulary Prayers and the signing formularies

- 1.2.2.1 The deputies’ work was hampered by the withdrawal of Dr. A.H. Bogaards and Rev. E. Kayayan.
- 1.2.2.2 The remainder of the deputies completed the rest of the retranslations during meetings and via e-mail. A section was available for review by means of the 2006 and Agenda 2009.
- 1.2.2.3 Regarding the unpublished part, the deputies encountered another problem: The formularies for the ordination of ministers, elders, deacons, elders and deacons, the Marriage Formulary and that for the confirmation of faith as currently used, is not only a translation, but also a reworking of the original (Rutgers) text and was accepted as such by previous synods. A simple retranslation was, therefore, impossible and at most the archaisms in the text could be addressed.

## **Decision: Note taken of 1.1 to 1.2.2.3**

## **2. Matters for the Synod to decide**

The deputies recommend that:

- 2.1 in terms of the translation of the confessions, the deputies who participated in the interdenominational translation project of the confessions (Prof. P.H. Fick, Drs. V.E. d’Assonville, A.H. Bogaards and Rev. E. Kayayan) continue the instruction for translation, especially in view of their different involvement on sub-commissions of the project;
- 2.2 the involvement of Dr. Bogaards and Rev. Kayayan be cleared up with them, in light of their withdrawal;

**Decision: Approved**

2.3 the Synod make a decision on those formularies that no longer conform to the original, since the initial instruction of a simple “retranslation” is not possible;

**Decision: The next deputies are not to retranslate the formularies, reworked according to the Rutgers text, but thoroughly language edit it (also in terms of clarity and archaism).**

2.4 the Synod again appoint deputies, including Prof. P.H. Fick, Drs. V.E. d’Assonville, A.H. Bogaards and Rev. E. Kayayan, for translation of the confessions, formularies and prayers that they may complete all outstanding work; and

2.5 every formulary has its own footnote numbers.

**Decision: Approved, as revised – revisions have already been made – Deputies Acts**

**LITURGICAL FORMULARIES (revised)**

(Revised translation – for circulating to the churches for testing)

**FORMULARY FOR THE ADMINISTERING OF THE HOLY BAPTISM TO ADULTS**

[Individuals not baptised as infants – for a variety of reasons, e.g. failure or straying of parents – who have meanwhile gained understanding and wish to receive the Christian baptism, must first be thoroughly instructed in the principles of the Christian faith. Should they have made a true confession (before the church council or representatives of the church council or publicly – whichever way the relevant church deems best), they are to be administered the holy baptism. The following formulary is to be used in administering the holy baptism.]

The main principles of the doctrine of the holy baptism are summarised in the following three points:

**Sin**

Firstly: We and our children are received and born into sin and is, therefore, under the wrath of God and shall not enter the kingdom of God,<sup>38</sup> unless we are born again.<sup>39</sup> This is taught to us by the immersion and sprinkling with water, by means of which the impurity of our souls is signified to teach us contempt for ourselves, to humble ourselves before God and to seek our purification and salvation beyond ourselves.

**Redemption**

Secondly: The holy baptism attests to us and seals the cleansing of sins by Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup> Thus we are baptised in the Name of God: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>41</sup>

For if we are baptised in the Name of the Father, God the Father attests to us of and seals the eternal covenant of grace He established with us,<sup>42</sup> thereby adopting us as His children and heirs and seeks to care for us with all that is good and protect us from all evil or ordain it to our benefit.

When we are baptised in the Name of the Son, the Son seals to us that He has cleansed us of all our sins through His blood and thereby allows us to enter into fellowship of His death

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<sup>38</sup> Romans 3:9, 19; Romans 5:12-21

<sup>39</sup> John 3:3

<sup>40</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:11

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>42</sup> Genesis 17:7, Galatians 4:6-7

and resurrection. This He does that we may be freed from our sins and God may judge us righteous.<sup>43</sup>

Likewise, when we are baptised in the Name of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit assures us with this holy sacrament that He seeks to dwell inside us and sanctify us as members of Christ.<sup>44</sup> This He does by granting us ownership of what we have in Christ, namely the cleansing of our sins and the daily renewal of our lives until we are ultimately placed unblemished among the community of the elect in eternal life.<sup>45</sup>

### **Gratitude**

Thirdly: All covenants comprise two parts and, therefore, God once again reminds and compels us to renewed obedience.<sup>46</sup> We must follow, trust in and love only this God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit with all our souls, with all our mind and with all our strength.<sup>47</sup> We must put of our old self and live in complete devotion to God. When we do lapse into sin, because of our weakness, we must not doubt God's grace or stay mired in our sins. Indeed the baptism is the seal and irrefutable testimony of our eternal bond with God.

### **Adult baptism**

Although children of Christians do not understand these things, they must [still] be baptised in the covenant. It is not permissible to baptise adults, unless they have come to realise their sin and have professed their repentance and faith in Christ. For this reason not only did John the Baptist, in proclaiming God's command of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, baptise whoever repented of their sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), but our Lord Jesus Christ also commanded His apostles to teach and baptise all the nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). This He did while making the promise that whoever believes and are baptised, will be saved (Mark 16:16) and so the apostles (as reflected in the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 2:38; 8:36,37; 10:47,48 and 16:14,15,31-33) in obedience only baptised adults that repented and confessed their faith. For this reason it is still today not permissible to baptise any adult other than those who have heard and understand the mysteries of the holy baptism, through the proclaiming of the holy Gospel; those who know, as with their faith, to give account with their mouth.

To perform this holy institution of God to His glory, to our comfort and to the edification of the church, let us call on His holy Name:

### **Prayer**

O, almighty, eternal God,

According to Your righteous judgement You punished the unfaithful, who showed no repentance of their sins, with the flood and kept and saved Noah in his righteousness and his family – a mere eight people – in Your great mercy; You drowned the hardened Pharaoh and all his people in the Red Sea, while leading Your people Israel through on dry ground – as symbol of the baptism.<sup>48</sup>

We pray that You in Your **unending [bottomless]** compassion, will look upon this person/people with mercy and accept him/her/them in Your Son Jesus Christ, through Your Holy Spirit that he/she/they may be buried with Him in His death and rise with Him to a new life.<sup>49</sup> We pray that he/she/they will gladly take up his/her/their cross,<sup>50</sup> while following Christ each day and worshipping Him in sincere faith, steadfast hope and ardent love<sup>51</sup> that

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<sup>43</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30  
<sup>44</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13  
<sup>45</sup> Romans 8:9, 15-16  
<sup>46</sup> Romans 12:1-2  
<sup>47</sup> Matthew 22:37-40  
<sup>48</sup> 1 Peter 3:20-21.  
<sup>49</sup> Romans 6:4 et seq.  
<sup>50</sup> Matthew 16:24  
<sup>51</sup> 1 John 4:18

he/she/they may leave this life, which after all is nothing but a continuous dying, comforted in You and stand on the last day without fear before the judgement seat of Christ, Your Son.

This we pray through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and rules together with You and the Holy Spirit, as the one and true God, into eternity. Amen

### **The adult to be baptised is then addressed**

You, N, wish to be baptised with the holy baptism that you may also receive the seal of becoming a member of God's church. In order to show that you not only accept the Christian faith in which you have been instructed and professed before us, but that you also, through the grace of God, seek to live your life accordingly, you must truthfully reply to the following before God and His church:

#### **Questions**

Firstly: Do you believe in the only true God, in the holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who created heaven and earth and everything on it out of nothing and still keeps and rules over it that nothing in heaven or on earth occurs without His Godly will?

*Reply:* Yes.

Secondly: Do you believe that you have been received and born into sin and are, therefore, under the wrath of God; that by nature you are not capable of good and disposed to all manner of evil; and that you often transgress the Lord's commandments in thought, word and deed; and do you sincerely repent of these sins?

*Reply:* Yes.

Thirdly: Do you believe that you received Jesus Christ, both true and eternal God and also flesh, taking on his human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, as Saviour from God; that in the faith you receive forgiveness of sins through His blood and have, by the power of the Holy Spirit, become part of Christ and His church?

*Reply:* Yes.

Fourthly: Do you accept all the Articles of the Christian faith, as proclaimed in this Christian church and from the Word of God, and do you undertake to persevere in these teachings for the rest of your life; do you thereby reject all heresies and false teachings that are in conflict with these teachings; and do you promise that you will persevere in fellowship with this Christian church, not only in hearing God's Word but also in sharing in the Lord's Supper?

*Reply:* Yes.

Fifthly: Do you sincerely undertake to always live a Christian life and renounce this world and its sinful temptations, as it befits members of Christ and his church, and do you willingly submit to all Christian discipline?

*Reply:* Yes.

May the great and benevolent God in His mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, grant you His Godly grace and blessing in this holy aspiration. Amen

### **Baptism**

Then the minister states:

N, I baptise you in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Almighty and gracious God and Father,

We thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins, through the blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and have adopted us as your children, through

Your Holy Spirit, as part of the body of Your only Son and, therefore, as Your children and confirm and seal this with the holy baptism. We also pray that You, through Your beloved Son, at all times govern this brother(s) [and/or] sister(s) with Your Holy Spirit that he/she/they may live a Christian and godly life and grow and mature in the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>52</sup> that he/she/they may profess the fatherly grace and compassion You have shown him/her/them and us all and live in all righteousness under our only teacher, King and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and courageously oppose and conquer sin, the devil and his forces,<sup>53</sup> in order to praise and worship You and Your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the only true God for ever more. Amen

## FORMULARY FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF FAITH

*To the congregation*

Beloved in the Lord,

God made in Jesus Christ, our Lord, a covenant of grace with us and our children<sup>54</sup>.

As children and heirs<sup>55</sup> we now share in the full richness of the bounty of this covenant.<sup>56</sup> We are, however, also called to obedience and acceptance of the covenant<sup>57</sup>. For this reason children of the covenant, upon attaining the necessary insight<sup>58</sup>, openly confess their faith in the presence of believers.<sup>59</sup> They must also profess their intent to keep, through the power of the Holy Spirit, fellowship<sup>60</sup> with God.

Guided by the Spirit of God<sup>61</sup> and His Word, these brothers and sisters requested the church council to openly confess their faith. Upon proper instruction and questioning, the church council is assured that each is equipped<sup>62</sup> to have come to such a personal confession.

Therefore, they each now receive the opportunity.

You now come before the face of God and in the presence of His church to confess your faith. I, therefore, request you to in all sincerity reply to the following questions:

- 1 Do you believe in the only true God<sup>63</sup>: Father, Son and Holy Spirit in whose Name you are baptised?<sup>64</sup>
- 2 Do you believe and confess that although you were received and born into sin<sup>65</sup> and although you are still predisposed to all evil<sup>66</sup>, you have been made holy in Christ<sup>67</sup> and adopted by the Father as His child<sup>68</sup> and raised through the Holy Spirit to a new obedience?<sup>69</sup>
- 3 Do you believe and confess the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and the complete teachings of salvation, as set out in the Articles of Faith of the Reformed churches and upheld in this church?

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<sup>52</sup> Ephesians 4:16-17  
<sup>53</sup> Ephesians 6:10-13  
<sup>54</sup> Acts 2:39  
<sup>55</sup> Romans 8:17  
<sup>56</sup> Genesis 17:9  
<sup>57</sup> 1 Timothy 1:15  
<sup>58</sup> Colossians 2:2  
<sup>59</sup> 1 Timothy 6:12  
<sup>60</sup> 1 John 1:3  
<sup>61</sup> Galatians 4:6  
<sup>62</sup> Ephesians 4:12  
<sup>63</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4  
<sup>64</sup> Matthew 28:19  
<sup>65</sup> Psalm 51:7  
<sup>66</sup> Romans 7:21  
<sup>67</sup> Hebrews 10:10  
<sup>68</sup> Ephesians 1:5  
<sup>69</sup> 1 Peter 1:21

- 4 Do you, by the grace of God, undertake to steadfastly persevere<sup>70</sup> in these teachings until the end of your days, to keep in fellowship with God<sup>71</sup>, to love Him with all your heart<sup>72</sup> and serve Him in obedience to His Word<sup>73</sup>? Do you also undertake to not conform to this world and its evil desires<sup>74</sup>, to seek your life and salvation outside yourself in Christ and confirm this confession through a God-fearing life<sup>75</sup>?
- 5 Do you promise, as full fellowship with the church of Christ is now open to you, to earnestly seek the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments<sup>76</sup>, as living member of the church,<sup>77</sup> to willingly and joyously apply your gifts to the benefit and salvation of other members<sup>78</sup> and to building the kingdom of God<sup>79</sup>? Do you promise to submit to<sup>80</sup> Christian instruction and discipline<sup>81</sup> when you transgress in doctrine and life?

NN, how do you respond?

Reply: Yes

*Exaltation and welcoming*

Now that you have openly professed your faith and accepted God's covenant promises, sealed in your baptism, we encourage you to persevere<sup>82</sup>.

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we warmly welcome you into full fellowship with the people of God. The God of all grace called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus. May He, after we have suffered a short time, make, confirm, strengthen and ground you in all perfectness. To Him be the glory and the power into all eternity. Amen.

**FORMULARY FOR THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE**

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, God instituted marriage with the following words: "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him<sup>83</sup>."

"So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs...Then the Lord God made a woman from rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh<sup>84</sup>."

This is how God still leads every man and woman to each other today. Our Lord Jesus Christ also attested of this institution of marriage in saying: "Haven't you read...that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? What God has joined together, let man not separate.<sup>85</sup>" Therefore, He honoured marriage with His presence and miracles at the wedding in Cana<sup>86</sup>. Paul called marriage, in view of

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<sup>70</sup> 1 Timothy 4:16  
<sup>71</sup> John 15:4  
<sup>72</sup> Deuteronomy 6:5  
<sup>73</sup> 1 Samuel 15:22  
<sup>74</sup> 1 Peter 1:14  
<sup>75</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30  
<sup>76</sup> 1 Peter 2:2  
<sup>77</sup> 1 Peter 2:5  
<sup>78</sup> Philippians 2:4  
<sup>79</sup> Acts 1:8  
<sup>80</sup> Matthew 18:15  
<sup>81</sup> Proverbs 8:33  
<sup>82</sup> Matthew 24:13  
<sup>83</sup> Genesis 2:18  
<sup>84</sup> Genesis 2:21-24, Matthew 19:4-6  
<sup>85</sup> Matthew 19:4-6  
<sup>86</sup> John 2:1-11

Christ and His church, a profound mystery. It teaches us that marriage that is found in pleasing God is noble, representing the bond between Christ and the church<sup>87</sup>.

The married is, therefore, assured of the guidance and support of God, even when totally unexpected. Although the married may endure all kinds of trials, as the consequence of sin, and although suffering may befall them, you can still bear it with patience and thankfulness, because it all comes from the Lord.

You must, however, understand the intent of marriage.

The one helps and supports the other in everything to do with this life and eternal life. The human race must also be built up through marriage<sup>88</sup> and parents must rear their children in the true knowledge and reverence to God's glory and to their salvation.

Marriage also serves to keep man from all sexual immorality and, therefore, each man has his own wife and every woman her own husband<sup>89</sup>, with the knowledge and blessing of their parents or guardians. Their marriage must be holy that the temple of God, namely the body, may be without blemish.

You must also know to act towards each other according to the Word of God: God has made you, the husband, the head of the woman, as Christ is the Head of the church<sup>90</sup>. You must love and guide, comfort and protect; and honour her as wife. You must not grow resentful of her, but live with her in wisdom. You are to faithfully and devotedly do your work that you may honourably care for your family and also give to the needy.

You, wife, love your husband, respect and submit to your husband<sup>91</sup> in all that is right and fair, just as the church submits to Christ. You must support your husband in everything that is good and right<sup>92</sup>, and give due attention to your family and household. You are to be reserved and honourable in life, an example of virtuousness to others<sup>93</sup>.

*The minister then asks the bridal couple:*

AB and CD, now that you know that God instituted marriage and what He commands, do you profess before God and all here present that it is your sincere intention to live in this holy state and do you now wish to be joined and confirmed in marriage?

Reply: Yes.

Do you, AB, declare that you know of no legal impediment to your intended marriage to CD here present and do you call on all here present to witness that you take CD as your legally wedded wife?

Reply: Yes.

Do you, CD, declare that you know of no legal impediment to your intended marriage to AB here present and do you call on all here present to witness that you take AB as your legally wedded husband?

Reply: Yes.

*Then the minister addresses the wedding couple as follows:*

May our Lord God confirm this aspiration He has given you and may your marriage be found in the Name of the Lord who created heaven and earth!

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<sup>87</sup> Ephesians 5:32

<sup>88</sup> Genesis 1:28

<sup>89</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

<sup>90</sup> Ephesians 5:23, 25

<sup>91</sup> Ephesians 5:24

<sup>92</sup> Genesis 3:16

<sup>93</sup> 1 Peter 3:1-6

*They now give each other the right hand and the minister turns to the groom:*

AB, you have declared before God and all here present that you take CD as your lawfully wedded wife. Do you promise to never leave her, to love her and faithfully care for her as a faithful and God-fearing husband owes his wife? Do you promise to live a holy life with her and remain true to her in everything, as instructed by the holy gospel?

How do you respond?

Reply: Yes.

*Then the minister turns to the bride:*

CD, you have declared before God and all here present that you take AB as your lawfully wedded husband. Do you promise to never leave him, to love him, submit to him, respect him and support him? Do you promise to live a holy life with him and remain true to him in everything, as a pious and faithful wife owes her husband and as instructed by the holy gospel?

How do you respond?

Reply: Yes.

*Then the minister states:*

I now declare that AB and CD here present are legally married. May the Father of all mercy, who in His grace called you to marriage, unite you in sincere love and faithfulness and give you His blessing! Amen

Because by nature there is no good in us and because all good gifts comes from above, from the Father of light, I now request you to kneel before the Lord that we may all pray for you and with you.

Let us pray.

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, You reveal Your goodness and wisdom in all You do. You said at the beginning that it is not good for the man to be alone. You created for him a helper that is suitable for him and ordained that the two become one. You have called and joined this couple in holy matrimony. We pray that You guide them through the Holy Spirit that they may live holy in true and steadfast faith, in accordance to Your Godly will, and oppose all evil. Bless them, as You blessed the righteous fathers, your faithful friends and servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are co-heirs of your covenant with the fathers. We therefore, pray that if You deem it fit to bestow children on them, You will grant them the grace to raise Christian children to the glory of Your holy Name, to the building of Your church and to the spreading of Your holy gospel.

Hear us, Father of all compassion, through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit – the only true, eternal God – worthy of all praise. Amen

*In conclusion, the minister requests the singing of a blessing and then states:*

May our LORD God fill you with His grace and bless you with a long and holy life in godly and loving union! Amen

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\* Delete where not applicable

## FORMULARY FOR THE BANNING OR CUTTING-OFF OF A MEMBER FROM THE CONGREGATION

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It has already been made known a number of times that N has committed grievous sin and thereby serious offence. We did this that he/she may repent to God through your Christian exhortation and prayers.

He/she has fallen into the devil's trap<sup>94</sup> and he is keeping him/her in his power to do his bidding. He/she stubbornly defies the will of the Father<sup>95</sup>. It is with sorrow that we have to announce that no one could to date attest that he/she sincerely confesses his/her sin and shows true remorse and has repented from straying. On the contrary, he/she compounds his/her guilt with a hardened and unrepentant heart all the more each day.

We have already informed you that we must resort to the final means of remedy, should he/she, despite the endless patience of the church, refuse to repent. In accordance with God's command, he/she must be cut-off from the church that the whole body may not be infected by the rotting and up to now irredeemable member and the Name of God be slandered<sup>96</sup>.

Thus we declare, the church council of the congregation, in the Name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ that N has now been cut off from the church of God. It is with profound sorrow that we expel him/her from the fellowship with Christ, from the holy sacraments, from all spiritual blessing from God bestowed on the congregation, by virtue of the promise of the King. Jesus Christ indeed said: "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven"<sup>97</sup>.

Beloved believers, we urge you to not associate with him/her that he/she may become ashamed. You must not deem him/her your enemy, however, but lovingly exhort him/her from time to time<sup>98</sup>.

Beloved brother and sister, you have seen how this man/woman's hardening has led to a fall. Learn from this lamentable situation to love the Lord with great veneration and heed the words of the apostle: "if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall"<sup>99</sup>. Faithfully persevere in fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and also with all believers to the end, in the hope of the glory of God. Be vigilant and oppose sin, the devil and his cunning; do not let your hearts be hardened; confess your sins; repent and let your life reflect the gospel of Christ.

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith"<sup>100</sup> - all to the glory of God the Lord<sup>101</sup>.

Since it is God who works in us and make us willing and competent to carry out His holy plan, let us call on His Name.

Almighty and righteous God and merciful Father,

We have sinned greatly against You. We deserve the pain and sorrow the cutting off of our former member has brought us. We pray to You, for Christ's sake, for mercy and compassion; forgive us, Lord, do not treat us as our sins deserve and do not punish us for our iniquities. We pray for Your Spirit to awaken in our hearts an ever-growing sorrow over sin. Let us worship You in awe over Your judgement of whoever perseveres in sin

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<sup>94</sup> 1 Timothy 3:7

<sup>95</sup> 1 John 3:8 et seq., John 8:44

<sup>96</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:5, 7, 13

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 16:19

<sup>98</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Timothy 5:22, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

<sup>99</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:12

<sup>100</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>101</sup> Philippians 2:13

unrepentant. Keep us from being infected by the world. Give us the strength for repentance in life, in Christ Jesus. We beseech You, bless our exhortation and guide, in grace and through our urging and example, the cut-off sinner and whoever perseveres in their unbelief back on the right path. Bring us joy instead of pain, gladness instead of sorrow that Your Name be made holy in Jesus Christ, our Lord, through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, into eternity. Amen

## **FORMULARY FOR ADMITTING A CUT-OFF MEMBER BACK INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

### **Announcement**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The church council announces with joy that N, who was previously cut-off from the church of Christ, confesses the sincere wish to be readmitted to the church.

Through the healing means of the cutting-off as well as serious exhortation and your prayers for him/her, he/she have come to confess his/her sins and to repent of his/her sinful ways. Upon the command of God, we must with joy receive into fellowship whoever repents. The church council shall, therefore and upon consent of the congregation, lift the ban or cutting-off that he/she may partake in the Lord's Supper. Whoever knows of any lawful impediment must timeously inform the church council. In the meantime, we must each thank the Lord for the grace He has shown this sinner and pray to the Lord that He shall keep this brother/sister in His faithfully Fatherly care to his/her eternal salvation.

### **The formulary for admittance**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The church council has made known to you with great joy that brother/sister N has sincerely repented and that he/she can, with your knowledge, once again be admitted to the church of Christ<sup>102</sup>.

Upon confirming the judgement of His church in the shunning of unrepentant sinners in Matthew 18, the Lord Jesus forthwith declared that whatever is loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven. He thereby lets it be known that all hope for salvation is not lost for whoever has been cut off from the church, but that he can be freed from the bonds of damnation<sup>103</sup>. Because God declares in His Word that He takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but when they turn from his ways and lives<sup>104</sup>. The church, therefore, always hopes in the repentance of a sinner who has strayed and opens its arms to welcome back the repentant.

No one who sincerely repents needs to ever doubt that God has accepted him/her in grace.

Christ Himself confirms it when He says: "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven"<sup>105</sup>.

Furthermore, Paul not only urges that a sinner must be removed from the church, but also that he/she must be forgiven and comforted having gained insight upon bearing just punishment<sup>106</sup>.

Welcome him/her in love and praise the Lord.

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<sup>102</sup> 2 Corinthians 2

<sup>103</sup> Matthew 18:18

<sup>104</sup> Ezekiel 18:23

<sup>105</sup> John 20:23

<sup>106</sup> 2 Corinthians 2:6-8

## **Declaration**

Beloved brother/sister in the Lord Christ,

You stand here before God and His holy church to openly declare the punishment just and that you have confessed your sins, repented and turned from your sinful ways. We now request you to sincerely answer each of the following questions:

### **Questions**

Do you believe that the Lord has forgiven your sins, for Jesus Christ's sake?

Yes.

Do you wish to be readmitted to the church of Christ?

Yes.

Do you promise to continuously repent and faithfully live according to God's Word?

Yes.

N, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ we declare that the cutting-off has now been lifted<sup>107</sup>.

You are once again admitted to the church of Christ and, therefore, share in the fellowship of Christ, the holy sacraments and in all spiritual blessings that God bestows on the church, by virtue of His promises<sup>108</sup>. Be assured of the grace of God, be vigilant and oppose sin, the devil and his cunning.

May God, for Jesus Christ's sake, keep you to the end. Amen

Beloved congregation, receive your brother/sister with good-will and love back in the kingdom of God and as a brother/sister in the church. Rejoice, because he/she was dead and now lives, was lost and is found<sup>109</sup>.

Rejoice with the angels in heaven over this sinner who has repented<sup>110</sup>.

Let us now praise and thank the Lord!

### **Prayer of Thankfulness**

Our Father in heaven,

We thank You for the repentance and new life You have granted our brother/sister<sup>111</sup>. We rejoice in your grace and patience.

We pray that You will show him/her mercy, renew him/her in Your image that he/she may serve You joyfully<sup>112</sup>.

Grant him/her the strength to stand firm in faith to the end<sup>113</sup> and let this example teach us that in You we find grace. We pray that You assure him/her and us that we are all, in our Lord Jesus Christ, co-heirs of eternal life. Amen

## **FORMULARY FOR ORDINATION OF MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

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<sup>107</sup> Matthew 18:18

<sup>108</sup> Ephesians 4:12-16, Romans 8:30

<sup>109</sup> Luke 15:24

<sup>110</sup> Luke 15:1-10

<sup>111</sup> Ezekiel 18:23

<sup>112</sup> Ephesians 4:23-24

<sup>113</sup> Matthew 24:13

We have repeatedly made known to you the name of our brother, N, here present, having been called as shepherd and teacher of this congregation. No one has raised any lawful impediment against his teaching and life. We shall, therefore, proceed, in the Name of the Lord, to ordain him. It is, however, necessary that you, brother N, and all here present first hear what God's Word teaches about the ordination and work of the shepherds or ministers of the Word.

We believe that Christ calls people to the offices of His church. Some he gives to be apostles and prophets; others He gives to be evangelists, some he gives to be pastors and teachers to prepare believers for service that the body of Christ may be built up<sup>114</sup>.

You, beloved brother has been called, as pastor and teacher, to care for, lead and protect the flock that God has entrusted in your care. You do this through the proclaiming of the Word, the administering of the sacraments, the service of prayer and aid in the governance of the church<sup>115</sup>.

Your ministry is thus the following:

1. You must carefully examine the Word of God and preach the pure and simple truth to the congregation. A minister must hold firmly to the trustworthy Word, as it has been taught, and proclaim sound doctrine<sup>116</sup>. You are to teach and comfort, exhort and guide members, both during services and home visitation, according to their need. Paul indeed says: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct; rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction<sup>117</sup>."
2. You are called to administer the sacraments, which the Lord has instituted as signs and seals of His grace. Christ clearly charges His church to administer the baptism<sup>118</sup> and to share in the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His death.
3. You must call on the Name of the Lord in confession of guilt, with praise and thanksgiving, and for intercession for all people<sup>119</sup>.
4. You are called to instruct children of the covenant in the knowledge of the Word of God, in keeping with Christ's command to Peter: "Feed my lambs"<sup>120</sup>.
5. You are called, together with the elders, to watch over the church and ensure good order; and give guidance that members will not stray, sin or live evil lives, like the unbelievers do. Hence, the keys of the kingdom was entrusted to the apostles and in the stewards, of which you are one<sup>121</sup>.
6. You are also called to proclaim the gospel to the world<sup>122</sup> and to encourage believers to confess the Name of the Lord Jesus before the people. You are called to seek the lost and bring them back to the fellowship of the church.<sup>123</sup>

You can thus see the glory, but also the great responsibility of the calling and service of the minister of the Word, bearing in mind the following words of the apostle: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's

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<sup>114</sup> Ephesians 4:11-12

<sup>115</sup> Acts 20:28

<sup>116</sup> Titus 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:15

<sup>117</sup> 2 Timothy 4:1, 2

<sup>118</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>119</sup> 1 Timothy 2:1

<sup>120</sup> John 21:15

<sup>121</sup> Matthew 16:19

<sup>122</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>123</sup> Luke 15:1-10

ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."<sup>124</sup>

### Questions

N, you have now heard your calling. We now ask to sincerely answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe in your heart that you have lawfully been called by this church of God and as such by God Himself to this holy calling?
2. Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and do you reject all doctrine in conflict with them?
3. Do you promise to fulfil this Godly calling faithfully and devotedly, in accordance with this doctrine?
4. Do you promise to live your life according to this doctrine?
5. Do you promise to submit yourself to the governance and discipline of the church, should you perhaps stray in doctrine and life?

What is your answer?

*He must answer: Yes*

Then the officiating minister and other ministers of the Word lay on him the right hand<sup>\*</sup> and say:

May God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this office, enlighten you with His Spirit, strengthen you with His hand and so govern you in your ministry that you may serve in life and work, to the glory of His Name and to the coming of the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ! Amen

*Then the officiation minister exhorts, from the pulpit, the ordained minister of the Word and also the church as follows:*

Beloved brother and fellow minister,

You must love Christ and as shepherd feed his sheep, watch over them, not because you must but because you are willing, not for sinful reasons but with an eagerness to serve; not lording it over those God has entrusted to you, but with the sincere wish to set an example for His flock<sup>125</sup>. Set an example for believers in word, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Devote yourself to reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Live in it that your counsel may be clear. Do not neglect the gifts you have received<sup>126</sup>.

Watch your life and doctrine, for in doing so you will save both yourself and your listeners<sup>127</sup>. Bear all trials, like a good soldier of Jesus Christ<sup>128</sup>. "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away<sup>129</sup>."

Beloved congregation, receive your minister of the Word with joy<sup>130</sup>. Show him due respect. Remember that it is through him God speaks to you. Let the coming of him who brings the good news be beautiful and pleasant. Remember him in your prayers<sup>131</sup>.

Obey those God has placed over you, for they watch over you and must give account to God<sup>132</sup>. In so doing, the peace of God will come into your homes and whoever receives this

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<sup>124</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18-20  
\* Only for the ordination of a probationer

<sup>125</sup> 1 Peter 5:2-3

<sup>126</sup> 1 Timothy 4:12-15

<sup>127</sup> 1 Timothy 4:16

<sup>128</sup> 2 Timothy 2:3

<sup>129</sup> 1 Peter 5:4

<sup>130</sup> Isaiah 52:7

<sup>131</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:25, 2 Thessalonians 3:1

brother, because he is a prophet<sup>133</sup>, will receive a prophet's reward and because you believe in Christ, through His Word, you will inherit eternal life through Christ.

Since no man is in himself capable of these things, let us with thanksgiving pray to God.

### **Prayer**

Merciful Father, we thank You for the gift of a faithful servant to this congregation. We pray that You make him all the more competent in the task for which You have prepared and called him. Enlighten his mind that he may know the truth of Your Word and grant him the confidence to proclaim the mystery of the gospel. Bestow on him the wisdom and insight to guide, together with the elders, the church and preserve the Christian peace that the church may increase in number and virtue under his care. Grant him the courage to bear every trial he may encounter in fulfilling his calling. Strengthen him through Your Spirit that he may remain steadfast to the end and may be received, together with all faithful servants, in the joy of the Lord.

Grant the church your grace that they may receive their shepherd with due deference and as one sent by You, submit to his teaching and exhortation, believe in Christ through his ministry of the Word and share in eternal life. Hear us, o Father, through Your beloved Son. Amen

## **FORMULARY FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS**

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have a number of times made known the name(s) of our fellow brother(s) selected as elder(s) and deacon(s) of this congregation to learn of any impediment against his/their ordination into office. Since no one has raised any lawful impediment against his/their ordination, we shall now proceed to ordain him/them. It is, however, necessary that you, brothers, and all here present hear what God's Word teaches about the ordination and work of the elders and deacons.

An elder exercises the service of governance in the church of Christ.<sup>134</sup> Elders or overseers<sup>135</sup> have governed and cared for the church through the Word throughout the history of the apostolic church,<sup>136</sup> with the gifts granted by the Holy Spirit.

*Regarding the deacons: The need for the service of uniting the church in fellowship in Christ rapidly arose in the apostolic churches<sup>137</sup>. This service is clearly distinct from the ministry of the Word and prayers and also the office of governance.<sup>138</sup>*

We believe Christ calls people to the offices of His church to prepare believers for service that the body of Christ may be built up and, therefore, Christ has bestowed on them certain gifts.

As elder(s), beloved brother(s), you are called to govern and care for the church. This office is not only entrusted to one or two, but to all the elders<sup>139</sup>, who make up the church council guided by and with the minister of the Word. In order to exercise their duties, elders must immerse themselves in the Word of God and in the richness of the gospel.

Your duties as elder(s) are thus as follows:

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<sup>132</sup> Hebrews 13:17

<sup>133</sup> Matthew 10:41

<sup>134</sup> Acts 15:6; Acts 20:28

<sup>135</sup> Philippians 1:1

<sup>136</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-2, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3

<sup>137</sup> Acts 2:42, 44-46; Acts 4:32-37; Acts 6:1-4

<sup>138</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2, 8; Philippians 1

<sup>139</sup> Acts 15:6

1. You must see to the good order of the church; to the regular and pure administering of the Word and sacraments; and to due reverence of the sacraments. You are called to oversee the faithful and complete fulfilment of the Godly duties of the minister(s) of the Word, the elders and deacons and offer good counsel to the minister(s) of the Word.
2. You must carefully see to the doctrine and life of every member and offer counsel and comfort to all believers. Exhortation and discipline must be exercised against members who refuse to repent and continue to live in sin<sup>140</sup> and welcome back into the fellowship of the church whoever repents.
3. You are called to oversee the teaching and life of ministers of the Word that everything may serve to build up the church and prevent the proclaiming of false doctrine.<sup>141</sup>
4. You are called to bring the lapsed and unbelieving to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, as that is how Christ gathers His church.

*As deacon(s), beloved brother(s), you are called to ensure that the church live their unity in Christ in active love. You must also ensure that believers do good to all that the love of Christ may be revealed.*

*Together with your fellow deacons, you are called to:*

- *visit and encourage all to practice and show love toward fellow believers and all people; and*
- *visit each member to take care that not one becomes estranged from the fellowship of faith through poverty, loneliness, age, disease or any other reason.*

*You are also called to carefully manage, wisely apply and share the means available in service of the needy, while offering comfort from Scripture.*

*In so doing you will be of service to your fellow believers and all people; equip the church for service and reflect the love of Christ to the world to the glory of God.*

N, you have now heard your calling. We now you ask to sincerely answer the following questions:

**Questions:**

1. Do you believe in your heart that you have lawfully been called by this church of God and as such by God Himself to this holy office?
2. Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and do you reject all doctrine in conflict with them?
3. Do you promise to fulfil this Godly calling faithfully and devotedly, in accordance with this doctrine?
4. Do you promise to live your life according to this doctrine?
5. Do you promise to submit yourself to the governance and discipline of the church, should you perhaps stray in doctrine and life?

*Then the minister asks:*

N, how do you answer?

*He/they then reply:*

Yes.

*Then the minister states:*

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<sup>140</sup> Ephesians 4:1, 3; 2 Timothy 2:25-26  
<sup>141</sup> Acts 20:29

May the all-powerful God and Father grant you His grace that you may be engaged in this office faithfully and fruitfully!

*He is furthermore called to exhort him/them as well as the congregation as follows:*

Be then, as elder(s), active in the governance of the church. Act as (a) guardian(s) of the house of God, exhort and comfort each according to his/her need. Watch over the pure teaching of the Word and that the congregation live a holy life.

*You, deacon(s), be devoted to your office. Know the need of believers and come to their aid. Encourage all to generosity and show wisdom in managing the means that have been entrusted to your care.*

Faithfully exercise your duties and set a good example to the church<sup>142</sup>. In so doing, you will gain honour in the church and confidence in your faith in Christ and at the end of this life enter the joy of the Lord.<sup>143</sup>

Beloved congregation, receive this man/men as servant(s) of God. Willingly submit to their counsel and governance, for they watch over your life, for which they will give account.<sup>144</sup>

*Submit to the guidance of the deacons in your fellowship of the saints.<sup>145</sup> Give without ulterior motives and not under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.<sup>146</sup> Faithfully do your daily work that you may be able to share with the needy.<sup>147</sup>*

Remember the elders and deacons in your prayers.

### **Prayer**

Since no man is in himself capable of these things, let us with thanksgiving pray to God.

Our Father,

We thank You for this/these man/men heeding Your call. We pray that you bless him/them all the more with the gifts to perform his/their office(s). Grant him/them wisdom, discernment, sagacity and love. Bestow on him/them the grace to faithfully persevere in service and never succumb to the disappointment, effort, sorrow or persecution of the world.

Lord, bless the church over which You have placed him/then. Make each willing to submit to the exhortation of the elder, in deference to their calling. In Your grace, provide the church with the means to be generous in giving and in all good work. Teach us, through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take each other's well-being to heart.

Let all this be to the glory of Your Name and the coming of the kingdom of Your Son Christ.

Hear us, o Father, through Your beloved Son. Amen

### **FORMULARY OF THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS**

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have a number of times made known the name(s) of our fellow brother(s) selected as deacon(s) of this congregation to learn of any impediment against his/their ordination into office. Since no one has raised any lawful impediment against his/their ordination, we shall now proceed to ordain him/them. It is, however, necessary that you, brothers, and all here present first hear what God's Word teaches about the ordination and work of the deacons.

The need for the service of uniting the church in fellowship in Christ rapidly arose in the apostolic church.<sup>148</sup> This service is clearly distinct from the ministry of the Word and prayers and also the office of governance.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13  
<sup>143</sup> Matthew 25:21, 23  
<sup>144</sup> Hebrews 13:17  
<sup>145</sup> Romans 12:8  
<sup>146</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:7  
<sup>147</sup> Ephesians 4:28

**[The deputies should note that the in the formulary for the ordination of deacons a paragraph is omitted after the sentence ending with “office of governance”.]**

As deacon(s), beloved brother(s), you are called to ensure that the church live their unity in Christ in active love. You must also ensure that believers do good to all that the love of Christ may be revealed.

Together with your fellow deacons, you are called to:

- visit and encourage all to practice and show love toward fellow believers and all people; and
- visit each member to take care that not one becomes estranged from the fellowship of faith through poverty, loneliness, age, disease or any other reason.

You are also called to carefully manage, wisely apply and share the means available in service of the needy, while offering comfort from Scripture.

In so doing you will be of service to your fellow believers and all people; equip the church for service and reflect the love of Christ to the world to the glory of God..

**You have now heard your calling. We now you ask to sincerely answer the following questions:**

1. Do you believe in your heart that you have lawfully been called by this church of God and as such by God Himself to this holy office?
2. Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and do you reject all doctrine in conflict with them?
3. Do you promise to fulfil this Godly calling faithfully and devotedly, in accordance with this doctrine?
4. Do you promise to live your life according to this doctrine?
5. Do you promise to submit yourself to the governance and discipline of the church, should you perhaps stray in doctrine and life?

*Then the minister asks:*

N, how do you answer?

*He/they then reply:*

Yes.

Then the minister states:

May the all-powerful God and Father grant you His grace that you may be engaged in this office faithfully and fruitfully!

*He is furthermore called to exhort him/them as well as the congregation as follows:*

Be devoted to your office. Know the need of believers and come to their aid. Encourage all to generosity and show wisdom in managing the means that have been entrusted to your care.

Faithfully exercise your duties and set a good example to the church.<sup>150</sup> In so doing, you will gain honour in the church and confidence in your faith in Christ and at the end of this life enter the joy of the Lord.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Acts 2:42, 44-46; Acts 4:32-37; Acts 6:1-4

<sup>149</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2, 8; Philipians 1

<sup>150</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13

<sup>151</sup> Matthew 25:21, 23

Beloved congregation, receive this man/men as servant(s) of God.<sup>152</sup> Give without ulterior motives and not under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.<sup>153</sup> Faithful do your daily work that you may be able to share with the needy.<sup>154</sup>

Remember the deacons in your prayers.

Since no man is in himself capable of these things, let us with thanksgiving pray to God.

### **Prayer**

Our Father,

We thank You for this/these man/men heeding Your call. We pray that you bless him/them all the more with the gifts to perform his/their office(s). Grant him/them wisdom, discernment, sagacity and love. Bestow on him/them the grace to faithfully persevere in service and never succumb to the disappointment, effort, sorrow or persecution of the world.

Lord, bless the church over which You have placed him/then. In Your grace, provide the church with the means to be generous in giving and in all good work. Teach us, through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take each other's well-being to heart. Let all this be to the glory of Your Name and the coming of the kingdom of Your Son Christ. Hear us, o Father, through Your beloved Son . Amen

**Decision: The Report is approved – revision have already been made – Deputies: Acta. The translation must be language edited, especially in light of long sentences that hinder understanding. The translation of “unending/bottomless” as well as the translation of the words in the third baptism question (te laat onderrig ...) are referred to the next deputies for final formulation.**

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<sup>152</sup> Romans 12:8  
<sup>153</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:7  
<sup>154</sup> Ephesians 4:28