

22. Liturgical

22.1 REPORT OF THE DEPUTIES LITURGICAL MATTERS (Artt 59, 60, 199, 220)

- A. Dr EJ Smit delivers the Report with the request that the adaptation of Sunday 20 should be struck and not be evaluated by Synod.
- B. **Decision:** The Petition of Protest is referred to Commission Liturgical Matters 1.
- C. Rev JP van der Walt delivers the Majority report of the Commission Liturgical Matters 1.
- D. Rev SJMS Smit delivers the Minority report of the Commission Liturgical Matters 1.

E. REPORT

1. Overview of assignments (references are to points and pages in Acta 2006)

During Synod 2006 the following was assigned to the Deputies Liturgical Matters:

1.1 *More user friendly numbering of the Psalms*

p609:4.1.3

Assignment 5: numbering and indexing/rubrication of Scriptural Hymns: After thorough study and consideration Deputies decided to follow the numbering and rubrication of the Scriptural Hymns as it is in the new Psalm book currently. The assignment to keep the "current numbering" (of the black Psalm book), to merely add new ones at the end with consecutive numbering, to add b-versifications at the end with own numbers and to group Scriptural Hymns in rubrics, could not be executed in a manner that presents an orderly whole. The Deputies are convinced that the current practice serves the goals the best.

Decided: There is an equality of votes. The recommendation falls away and the decision of 2003 stands.

1.2 *Selection of new Confessional songs*

p613:4.6

"4.6.1 The evaluation of submitted Confessional songs is a continual process with which a Sub-commission of the Deputies is busy. Possible other versifications (or confessional songs) of dr AGS Venter are currently being rounded of and finally evaluated.

4.6.2 Final Report and recommendations on this will be included in the Supplementary Agenda.

Decision: Note taken."

1.3 *New Messianic version of Psalm 110*

p739:1.6.2

From the discussion in the Commission with the adjudication of the Petition of Protest (of the Reformed Church Pretoria-Rooiwal against the recommendation of the 2001 versification of Psalm 110 by Synod 2003) it became clear that there is a strong need for a Messianic indication of Psalm 110, even stronger than in the 1936 versification. In the Reformed world there are examples of such versifications where Christ is expressly indicated in Psalm 110. Such an indication was outside of the assignment with regard to the 2001 versification. For this reason the following is recommended:

1.6.2.1 The Deputies Liturgical Matters investigate the possible creation of a suitable Scriptural Hymn of Psalm 110 in which the Messiah is expressly indicated.

1.6.2.2 The Deputies Liturgical Matters presents such a Scriptural Hymns to the next Synod.

Decision: Approved.

1.4 *Footnotes at Messianic Psalms*

p745:2

That the Petition of Protest is complied with in the following manner:

2.1 *The to-be-named Deputies for Liturgical Matters review the formulations of the existing footnotes in line with the decision of Acta 2003:642 with consideration of the motivations of the Petitions of Protest.*

2.2 *All the texts from the Psalms that are quoted in the New Testament with a direct link to Christ are indicated with footnotes.*

Decision: Approved.

- 1.5 *Guidelines for order arrangements when an elder or officiator leads the service.*
p748:2

The Petition of Protest is complied with in the following manner:

1.2 *The to-be-named Deputies for Liturgical Matters receive the assignment to study the following matters:*

1.2.1 *Guidelines for the officiator in the service that are in line with the decisions of 1985 and 1997 with regard to the liturgy with consideration of previous decisions on reading services.*

1.2.2 *To advise Synod on the following matters: blessing at the start of the service, confirmation of servants, Confession of faith, use of audio-visual aids, etc.*

Decision: Approved.

- 1.6 *Selection of new Scriptural Hymns*

In addition to above assignment of Synod 2006, there is also a standing assignment to the Deputies to evaluate new Scriptural Hymns that are submitted and to make a recommendation to Synod on this (see Acta 1994:538-539).

- 1.7 *Summarising overview or the assignments to the Deputies Liturgical Matters*

The assignments of Synod 2006 to the Deputies consist of five matters, namely:

- (1) More user friendly numbering of the Psalms
- (2) Selection of new Confessional songs and Scriptural Hymns
- (3) New Messianic version of Psalm 110
- (4) Footnotes at the Messianic Psalms
- (5) Guidelines for order arrangements for when an elder or officiator guides the service.

Decision: Note taken of 1.1 to 1.7.

2. Carrying out the assignment

- 2.1 *More user friendly numbering of the Psalms*

2.1.1 Numbering of the Psalms

2.1.1.1 *Matters of which the Synod should take note*

2.1.1.1.1 The current numbering system according to which the Psalms of the 2003 Psalm book is arranged is not user friendly and makes it difficult to use.

2.1.1.1.2 The current numbering system (as well as the agreement that there will not be reference to the "Totius" or "Cloete" version of a Psalm – see Acta 2003:640, 3.2.1), has as consequence that the relevant page number on which the Psalm occurs is used when a certain Psalm is sung. However, the page numbers are printed relatively small because the space on each page is limited. The result is that especially the older members find it reasonably difficult to find a Psalm. There is more confusion especially when there are more than two versions of a certain Psalm in the Psalm book (for instance the four versions of Psalm 23).

2.1.1.2 *Matters that Synod should decide on*

2.1.1.2.1 The Deputies recommend that the Psalms are numbered as follows:

- Ps 23-1
- Ps 23-2
- Ps 23-3
- Ps 23-4

Motivation:

- (a) With this method of numbering it is not necessary to look up the small printed page numbers

- (b) Confusion regarding the Psalm that is sung can be largely avoided
- (c) Indications can be added to the existing headings without much effect on the setwork of the Psalm book

2.1.2 Numbering of the Scriptural Hymns

2.1.2.1 Matters that Synod should take note of

2.1.2.1.1 At Synod 2006 there was an equal vote with regard to the matter of the numbering of the Scriptural Hymns. The implication of this equal vote is that Synod 2003's decision on the numbering of the Scriptural Hymns remains valid.

2.1.2.1.2 Synod 2003's decision entails that the numbering of the Scriptural Hymns should be changed with a reprinting of the Psalm book to a numbering system in which all the new versifications approved since 2003 are merely added after Scriptural Hymn 54 as Scriptural Hymns 55, 56, 57 etc.

2.1.2.2 Matters that Synod should decide on

2.1.2.2.1 In spite of the above-mentioned the Deputies still recommend that the current system of numbering and rubrication of the Scriptural Hymns (as used in the 2003 Psalm book) remains.

Motivation:

- (a) The cost implication of an alternative numbering system is very high
- (b) The current numbering system makes it possible to divide and group current and future approved Scriptural hymns sensibly according to rubrics
- (c) This manner of rubrication is similar to what Totius himself did with the 1939 Scriptural Hymns, and with what is currently the practice world-wide.

Decision: The following Order Arrangement is approved:

1. **The matter on numbering/rubrication is not discussed any further.**
2. **The matter is referred to the to-be-named Deputies.**
3. **Input should be gained from the churches.**
4. **The to-be-named Deputies receive the mandate to conclude the matter.**

2.2 Selection of new Confessional songs and Scriptural Hymns

2.2.1 Matters of which Synod should take note

2.2.1.1 A number of new Confessional songs and Scriptural Hymns have been received and evaluated

2.2.1.2 The criteria set by Synod 1994 (see Acta 1994:538-539) and Synod 1955 (see Acta 1955:65) was used to evaluate the songs.

2.2.1.3 Feedback regarding the evaluation of the Deputies was given to each versifyer or to the next of kin to the versifyers who are already deceased.

2.2.1.4 Possible other Confessional songs and Scriptural Hymns are currently being rounded of and evaluated. If they can be recommended for use in services of the GKSA, they will be presented in the Supplementary Report of the Deputies Liturgical Matters.

Decision: Note taken of 2.2.1.1 to 2.2.1.4.

2.2.2 Matters that Synod should decide on

2.2.2.1 The following **Confessional Songs** are recommended by the Deputies for use in the services of the GKSA:

Troos vir lewe en sterwe

Dr AGS Venter

Omdigting van Heidelbergse Kategismus, Sondag 1 (vr/antw 1)

Melodie: Ps 145

1.

Troos my tog, Heer, in lewe en in dood,
want uit myself kom ek nie uit die nood.
U het my siel en liggaam losgekoop,
daarom rig ek op Christus al my hoop.

2.

Met bloed so kosbaar het Hy vol betaal,

Hy het my uit die duisternis kom haal.
Die Here sorg, Hy weet van elke haar,
in elke krisis weet ek: Hy is daar!

3.

In alles is die Here goed vir my!
Ook word ek altyd deur sy Gees gelei:
hier waar ek lewe, wil ek Jesus eer,
wanneer ek sterf, dan leef ek by die Heer.

Besluit: Goedgekeur.

Jesus, ons Verlosser

Dr AGS Venter

Omdigting van Heidelbergse Kategismus, Sondag 11 (vr/antw 29)
Melodie: Gesang 183 ("Heilige Jesus, Heer van die Here ...")

Jesus, Verlosser,
Seun van ons Vader,
van al my sondes maak U my vry.
U Naam is enig,
U leef vir ewig,
U het gesterf, o Heer, vir my.

Besluit: Goedgekeur.

Krag in brood en wyn

Dr AGS Venter

Omdigting van Heidelbergse Kategismus, Sondag 28 (vr/antw 75)
Melodie: Ps 119 (1936-beryming, tweede melodie)

1.

Uit u woorde weet ons, Here,
dat die brood en wyn ons voed.
Ons moet dink by hierdie maaltyd
aan u liggaam en u bloed.
U belofte is die offer
wat U gee om my te red.
Ek sien tekens voor my oë
en ontvang dit in gebed.

2.

Heer, u liggaam is gekruisig
en u bloed het U gestort.
U versterk my gees vir ewig,
U bepaal wat van my word.
Ek ontvang die brood en beker
as die tekens van u trou.
Ek sal sing want ek weet seker
dat u liefde my omvou.

Besluit: Goedgekeur.

2.2.2.2 The following **Scriptural Hymns** are recommended by the Deputies for use in services of the GKSA:

Wat eers vir my 'n bate was

Dr AP van der Colf

Beryming van Filippense 3:7-12 [A-3]
Melodie: Lied 396

1.

Wat eers vir my 'n bate was
beskou ek nou as net 'n las.
Dis niks teen wat ek alles wen
om Christus as my Heer te ken.

2.
Omdat ek glo, is ek vergeef
en vrygespreek om te kan leef.
Niks kon ek doen – maar deur die Gees
laat God my een met Christus wees.

3.
Mag ek al meer, as God se kind,
die krag van Christus ondervind –
die krag wat my uit lyding, nood
met Hom laat opstaan uit die dood.

4.
Ek span my in om te verkry
wat Christus vir my voorberei.
Ek gee myself, my hele saak,
aan Hom wat my sy eie maak.

Besluit: Goedgekeur.

Ek is die ware wingerdstok

Dr AP van der Colf

Beryming van Johannes 15:1-8

Melodie: Lied 275 "O God van Jakob, deur u hand ..."

Alternatiewe melodie: Ps 20 (Cloete omdigting)

1.
Ek is die ware wingerdstok;
my Vader gee die groei.
Die lote wat nie vrugte dra
word deur Hom weggesnoei.

2.
Maar elke loot met vrugte aan
dié sny Hy skoon en reg.
So dra die loot al beter vrug,
en bly die eenheid heg.

3.
Ek is die ware wingerdstok;
elkeen van jul 'n loot.
Wie in My bly, en Ek in hom,
sy oes is vol en groot.

4.
Bly jul in My, my woord in jul,
kan jul My alles vra –
my Vader word verheerlik waar
jul volop vrugte dra.

5.
Ek het die Vader waarlik lief

en doen wat Hy wil hê;
ook jul sal in my liefde bly
as jul doen wat Ek sê.

6.
Dan loop jul vreugdebeker oor,
my blydschap maak jul sterk.
Kan daar 'n groter liefde wees
as wanneer vriendskap wêrk?

7.
Ek noem jul vriende as jul doen
dit wat Ek jul beveel.
Dit wat Ek van die Vader hoor
het Ek jul meegedeel.

8.
Wat jul die Vader deur My vra,
sal Hy gee in sy trou.
Ek stel jul aan om vrug te dra –
die vrug van liefde hóú.

Besluit: Goedgekeur.

Verheerlik God

Dr AP van der Colf

Beryming van 1 Petrus 1:3-9

Melodie: Ps 128 (1936-weergawe)

Alternatiewe melodie: Lied 354 "O Christus ons verlange ..."

1.
Verheerlik God, die Vader
van Christus onse Heer!
Hy laat ons saam met Jesus,
nuut leef en triomfeer.
Dit gee die hoop wat lewe,
wat vas en seker bly:
'n erfnis in die hemel
klaar vir ons voorberei.

2.
Jul gló – en jul word veilig
deur God se krag bewaar;
jul heil word teen die einde
ten volle openbaar.
In allerlei beproewing,
laat dit jul inspireer:
geloof wat eg getoets is,
is ál wat nie verweer.

3.
Geloof is veel meer kosbaar
as goud – wat sal vergaan.
Geloof word ook gesuiwer
om heerlik te kan staan.
Jul liefde vir die Here
- al bly Hy ongesien –

jul blydskap, onuitspreeklik,
het Hy vir jul verdien.

Besluit: Word nie goedgekeur nie.

2.3 *New Messianic version of Psalm 110*

2.3.1 Matters that Synod should take note of

2.3.1.1 By order of Synod 2006 all congregations were requested by means of correspondence from the Administrative Buro, articles in *Die Kerkblad*, as well as notices on the mail list of the GKSA to encourage members with the necessary gifts to create a new versification of Psalm 110 so that the Deputies may receive and evaluate such an attempt.

2.3.1.2 In the above-mentioned pieces specific mention is made of the requirement that the Messiah should appear in such a versification and that the guidelines of Synod 2003 will be used for the adjudication of such versifications.

2.3.1.3 Seven Scriptural Hymns of Psalm 110 were received in reaction to the call.

2.3.1.4 Not one of the Scriptural Hymns of Psalm 110 that have been received can be recommended to Synod for approval because none of them meet the requirements as laid down by Synod 2003.

Decision: Note taken of 2.3.1.1 to 2.3.1.4. The to-be-named Deputies receive the assignment to get new versifications of Ps 110 (Messianic version) for evaluation according to the guidelines of Synod.

2.4 *Footnotes at the Messianic Psalms*

2.4.1 Matters that Synod should take note of

2.4.1.1 Possible revision of the existing footnotes in the 2003 Psalm book was investigated with consideration of the guidelines in Acta 2003:642.

2.4.1.2 Possible addition of footnotes was also investigated in order to assure that all the texts from the Psalms that are quoted in the New Testament with a direct link to Christ are indicated by means of footnotes in the 2003 Psalm book.

Decision: Note taken of 2.4.1.1 and 2.4.1.2.

2.4.2 Matters that Synod should decide on

2.4.2.1 The following revisions of existing footnotes are recommended by the Deputies:

Psalm 22: 8-9, as well as 22:17

Current formulation of the footnote:

“Jesus uses the beginning of Psalm 22 (phrase 1 in both versions) in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 as one of his words on the cross. Psalm 22:19 (phrase 7 in the 1936 versification and phrase 5 in the 2001 versification) is used in John 19:24 with reference to Jesus Christ (also see Mark 15:24 and Luke 23:34). Psalm 22:23 (phrase 9 in the 1936 versification and phrase 6 in the 2001 versification) is used in Hebrew 2:12 with reference to Jesus Christ.”

Recommendation: Amend the formulation to read:

“Different verses of Psalm 22 are quoted in the Gospels in the description of the events on the cross, including Matthew 27: 35, 39, 43, 46; Luke 23: 33, 34, 35; Mark 15: 24, 29-30, 34 and John 19: 23, 24. In Hebrew 2:12 a quote from Psalm 22:23 (phrase 9 in the 1936 versification and phrase 6 in the 2001 versification) is used with reference to Jesus Christ.”

Motivation: In the existing footnote the list of New Testamental texts in which certain verses of Psalm 22 is quoted is not complete. The page lay-out leaves limited room for footnotes and therefore an amendment such as the one above can be considered.

Psalm 41:10

Current formulation of footnote:

“Jesus uses Psalm 41:10 (phrase 5) in John 13:18 with reference to Himself.”

Recommendation: Amend the formulation to read as follows:

“Jesus uses these words of Psalm 41:10 in John 13:18.”

Motivation: The words “with reference to Himself” that currently occur in the footnote, can create confusion.

Psalm 78:24

Current formulation of footnote:

“Psalm 78:24 (phrase 9 in the 1936 versification and phrase 7 in the 2001 versification) is used in John 6:31-32 with reference to Jesus Christ.”

Recommendation: Amend the formulation to read as follows:

“Jesus uses Psalm 78:24 (phrase 9 in the 1936 versification and phrase 7 in the 2001 versification) in John 6:32 with reference to Himself.”

Motivation: In John 6:32 it is Jesus himself that is speaking and He applies Ps 78:24 to Himself.

2.4.2.2 After thorough consideration of the recommendations no addition of footnotes are recommended by the Deputies at this stage.

Decision: Approved – amendments already included – Deputies Acta.

2.5 *Guidelines for order arrangements when an elder or another officiator guides the service*

2.5.1 Guidelines for so-called “reading services”

2.5.1.1 *Matters that Synod should take note of*

2.5.1.1.1 Interpretation of the assignment

The Deputies realised in the run of the study that the assignment was given by the National Synod Potchefstroom, but that after our unification with Synod Midlands will report to the General Synod.

The guidelines that we lie before the General Synod, will therefore also be applicable to churches from the previous Synod Midlands. In addition to the decisions and traditions of Synod Potchefstroom regarding the liturgy and specifically reading services, the Deputies felt it necessary to pay attention to arrangements that were valid for Synod Midlands. In this the Deputies made use of the contributions of proff RS Letšosa (whose thesis is on a relevant liturgy for the churches in the previous Synod Midlands) and SJ van der Merwe (who served churches in the resort of the previous Synod Midlands for many years).

The Deputies sometimes deemed it necessary to distinguish between churches from the previous Synod Potchefstroom and those of the previous Synod Midlands. In the rest of the Report the term African Language Speaking Churches is used to look at the unique situation and needs in those churches that previously formed part of the previous Synods Midlands and Soutpansberg. To distinguish from these churches there is a further reference to Afrikaans Speaking Churches.

2.5.1.1.2 Synod decisions

Synod Midlands did not meet regularly. Yet certain liturgical uses originated in the churches of that Synod. The traditions that originated are discussed at other applicable places in the rest of the Report.

2.5.1.1.2.1 Synod Potchefstroom

Acta 1894 (Acta, 1894:64, 170)

A **Point of Description** serves:

Of een ouderling die in de gemeente voorgaat het recht heeft om den zegen uit te spreken. (Does an elder who leads the service have the right to give the blessing?)

Decision: *De Synode beskouwt het uitspreken van den zegen te behooren tot het ambt van den leeraar, dat een ouderling zich er dus van moet onthouden. (The Synod views the giving of the blessing as belonging to the office of the minister, and that an elder should therefore refrain from doing so).*

Acta 1942 (Acta, 1942:190, 115)

Point of description:

Since it seems that there is a need for more uniformity with regard to our reading services, the General Synod is asked to give guidance regarding the order and completion of reading services.

Decision: *With regard to the uniformity of our reading services the General Synod advises Regional Synod C.P. to guide the church councils to follow the established liturgical order of our church and guideline (Synod 1933) with the omission of the votum (Ps 124:8), and the blessing (Num 6:14-26 and 2 Cor 13:13) at the beginning and the end of the service.*

Acta 1961 (Acta, 1961:449-452, 150)

A **Petition of Protest** from the GK Vereeniging serves against the decision of Synod 1942. Excerpts from this Petition of Protest is provided in **Appendix 1**. A Commission report is submitted, after which Synod decides:

Decision:

2.2.3.1 “(a) The Petition of Protest concerns the words ‘with omission of the votum (Ps 124:8) and the blessing (Num 6:14-26 and 2 Cor 13:13) at the beginning and the end of the service’ in art 115 of Synod 1942, which advises church council on uniformity at reading services.”

2.2.3.2 “(b) Die protests of the brother are granted and the decision of 1942 (art 115) becomes: ‘In relation to uniformity of our reading services the General Synod recommends ... to follow the established liturgical order of the Synod 1927 with the votum (Ps 124:8) at the beginning and the blessing at the end.’”

Acta 1985 (Acta 1985:398-425, artt 91, 96, 209, 251)

In a thorough Report on Liturgical Matters there is no reference to the reading service. There is an indication that a **proponent as liturgist** was discussed with regard to the blessing. For the purpose of this Report the importance lies in the fact that the proponent does minister the Word independently. However, he does not do it as teaching elder. It has been noted:

“3.2.5.3 Since your Commission did not come to a recommendation with regard to proponents, it is recommended that the matter be referred to the to-be-named study Deputy.

Decision: *This point is dropped.”*

The fact that the guidance of a service by a proponent was under discussion is interesting in the light of the fact that he, like an elder or other officiator who holds a reading service, only speaks a devotional word (Van der Walt, 1962:8).

Remark:

The Synod deviated from the recommendation that the matter be referred to Study Deputies without any motivation. The proponent has already been approved academically and ecclesiastically to be a minister of the Word and therefore to lead the service. By leading in a service, he does so with the aim of receiving a calling. The question is whether his sermon only entails a devotion. However, this matter does not fall within the assignment of these Deputies. It deserves further investigation in the opinion of the Deputies.

Acta 1997 (Acta 1997:731-768, artt 85, 150, 160, 239)

2.2.5.1 With regard to the blessing note is taken of the following matter:

“6.3.1.2 God sends authorised representatives who bring His blessing to the congregation. The blessing is founded in the blessing of the New Testamental letters, where the authorised proclaims in in the Name and on the authority of the Sender. The greeting and sending blessing is layed on the congregation in command of God and by God himself like the words and the body language with the hands testifies.

Decision: *Note taken of point 6.3.1.”*

2.2.5.2 The following point is relevant with regard to the sending blessing:

“10.2.2 It should be clear liturgically in word and gesture that the servant is authorised to lay the blessing of the covenant God on the covenant congregation on His behalf.

“Decision with regard to 10.2.1–10.2.3: Approved as ammended (ammendments already madg – Deputaties Acta).”

2.5.1.1.2.2 Synod Midlands

In the summary of his thesis prof RS Letšosa (2005:v) makes the following statement with regard to the previous Synod Midlands:

“Liturgy is one of the most important, but also one of the most undermined aspects of the Gereformeerde Kerke in Synod Midlands. Little research has been doen on liturgy and only a small number of Church Councils concern themselves with this matter. The result is that most of the churches in the Gereformeerde Kerke in the Midlands stare sincretism, secularism and modernist tendencies in the face.”

There is no liturgy for the previous Synod Midlands. The liturgical decisions of Synod Potchefstroom were often used without any formal decision.

Prof RS Letšosa (2005:v, vi) concludes his summary as follows:

“An applicable liturgy for the Gereformeerde Kerke in Synod Midlands will be one that is dynamic and shows an interactive communicative character. There should be a dialogue between God and His children. The liturgist should not be an individual that stands between God and man and undermines the nature of the liturgy. All members should participate and should follow the liturgy. This study therefore suggests a free liturgy because Africans are spontaneous. However, this liturgy should be characterised by the necessary order.”

2.5.1.1.3 Is the reading service a service?

2.5.1.1.3.1 Scriptural information

The actual thing about the New Testamental service is that God and his people meet in the gatherring of the elevated Christ and his church, on this day of Christ’s resurrection: the first day of the week. Where two or three – the smallest possible multiple – gather in his Name, there He will be in their midst. In the service the two parties of the covenant meet. God is the first. All the initiatives come from Him. He calls for a gathering through his Spirit and the two parties meet each other in the mutuality of love. This is possible based on the reconciliatory work of Christ. The congregation is therefore also active: they may sing, worship, listen and give offerings. However, it is answer movement. God works the answer when He first approaches his people. His meeting with the congregation makes the meeting of the congregation with Him and each other possible. In short the gathering of the congregation can be described as a threefold meeting: a meeting of God with his people, and therefore a meention of his people with God, and between believers. Stated differently: It is the gathering of God in the Redeemer Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit with believers, the body of Christ.

Liturgy (of the Greek *leitourgia*) indicates personal, homely and congregational (ecclesiastical) with regard to what people do when they meet God, listen to Him and worship Him, practice religion and glorify Him. It is a command by Scripture to the congregation that lives in communion with the Lord today. Even when the called officiator is lacking, the congregation remains responsible for practicing liturgy. Liturgical order indicates the order, not the sequence in the meeting of the congregation. The sequence can be a part of order, but liturgical order is not equal to the sequence or to formal liturgy. Order especially includes the harmony in the acts of a specific gathering, as well as the liturgical content of the acts. The service is often static, as if the service is a program that starts and ends. The dynamic aspect of the gathering is to meet in Spirit and truth, to obey and to listen and pray, and this does not always come to the fore. The act that the congregation commit as congregation during the meeting is expressed by the English word “worship” and the German word “Gottesdienst”. The listening and worship

continue in the homes, the workplaces and the places of relaxation and in the inner spaces of the believer as result of the meeting of the congregation as the people of God.

The Heidelberg Catechism establishes the requirements for the service as follows: The congregation of God should gather diligently (with God and each other) to hear the Word of God, use the sacraments, to call on the Lord openly and to give love offerings.

2.5.1.1.3.2 Church history

There is little information of the first two centuries. From what is available, two clear lines are visible, namely the line of the synagogical service and the line of the institution of the Holy Communion. For this reason the Word service and the Holy Communion were to the focal points that formed the service. The prayer formed a very important part of the service and they also sang. During the first four centuries there was a greeting and an answer of the congregation, and a blessing. Yet these were not necessarily crucial aspects of the service. In the fourth century the sacraments became dominant, especially the mass, and the important aspects of communion of God with his congregation and Christ as Redeemer in the service disappeared. The meeting now becomes a meeting between God and the priest and to a lesser extent between the priest and the congregation. The congregation becomes spectators of acts that the priest complete with his back turned to the congregation.

In the Reformation the service is in its essence restored. The Word service, sacraments, prayers and church song forms the backbone of the meeting. It becomes a meeting of God in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. The church order principles for the liturgy focussed on the Word service and sacraments, the confirmation of office bearers and marriage confirmation and based on the Church Order of Dordt these functions are assigned to the called and confirmed minister of the Word. The writings of that time mentions the tradition of reading services where the minister of the Word is not personally present, but links the reading to the reading of the written sermon of a confirmed minister of the Word.

2.5.1.1.3.3 Definition of a service

A service is a threefold gathering: A meeting of God and the congregation (in which He takes the initiative and calls them through His Spirit), and consequent upon this (made possible by God's initiative) a meeting of the congregation with God and with each other. This meeting can also be described as the practice of communion. The elements that are crucial in the service, is Scripture reading, preaching, sacraments, prayer, songs, the love offering. Other acts such as the confession of faith, hearing the Law, and the blessing is important, but not necessary in every service.

2.5.1.1.3.4 Finding regarding Assignment 1.2.1: guidelines for so-called "reading services"

From the so-called (2.5.1.1.1-2.5.1.1.3) it is deducted that a so-called reading service, when the sermon of a confirmed minister of the Word is read, is in fact a service.

Decision: Note taken of 2.5.1.1.1 to 2.5.1.1.3.4.

2.5.1.2 Matters on which Synod must decide

From the above-mentioned the Deputies recommend the following with regard to guidelines for so-called "reading services":

2.5.1.2.1 that the guidelines 1985 and 1997 with regard to liturgy are also valid for the reading service. (The two blessings are reported on below.)

2.5.1.2.2 that the Deputies Liturgical Matters appointed by Synod 2009 study all the facets of the proponent as officiator in the service in the light of CO, artt 3 and 16 and the decisions of 1985 and 1997 on liturgy, are report to Synod 2012 on this matter.

Decision: Approved.

2.5.2 The situation in church practice

2.5.2.1 Matters that Synod should note

It is crucial to review the church practice with regard to services in Afrikaans speaking churches on the rural frontier and the African Language speaking communities since the so-called reading services are often used in these churches. In Appendix 2 an idea is provided of the practical circumstances in which services are held. Below follows a sketch of the church practices with regard to reading services as summarising remarks from Appendix 2.

2.5.2.1.1 Resistance against reading services

There is a resistance against the so-called reading services in both Afrikaans and African Language speaking churches. Many believers do not view it as a service. A much smaller percentage of people take part in the services than would otherwise.

2.5.2.1.2 In Afrikaans speaking churches on the rural frontier

A minister of the Word preaches up to three or four times on a Sunday. Between services they travel hundreds of kilometres between different meeting points. Reading services are frequent at several meeting points since the ministers of the Word find it physically impossible to reach each meeting point every Sunday.

2.5.2.1.3 In the African Language speaking churches

2.5.2.1.3.1 On average there is one minister for every three local churches. Each local church also has different meeting points. In addition to the ministry of the church where the Minister of the Word is involved, he also has great responsibility as consultant. This places pressure on the preparation of sermons.

2.5.2.1.3.2 The typical African Language speaking church has more female than male members, while young people are also the majority. The church council is often small due to the small number of men.

2.5.2.1.3.3 The perception exists in these churches that elders can and may preach. According to this perception they may not be deprived of this privilege. Preaching is important to them, although preparation is not viewed as crucial. Many times the elder who has to preach is only appointed on the Sunday morning in the consistory.

2.5.2.1.3.4 It sometimes happens that there is no elder present at the service. A deacon that is present will then lead the service. This, together with the involvement of the deacon in the Church Council (CO, art 38), results in the fact that there is no clear distinction between the special services of the elder and the deacon.

2.5.2.1.3.5 Especially during holidays neither elder nor deacon may pitch at the meeting point. The question is whether those present can continue and have a service? In some cases only women are present. The question is whether they may then continue and have a service.

2.5.2.1.3.6 There is a need to pay attention to equipping officiators of reading services as such in addition to attention to the service itself.

2.5.2.1.3.7 The shortage of available ministers over and against the numerous meeting points in practice results in believers gathering in services frequently without receiving the greeting or blessing. Currently the arrangement is that the blessing of the Lord may be given by the officiator of a reading service.

Decision: Note taken of 2.5.2.1 to 2.5.2.1.3.7.

2.5.2.2 Matters that synod should note

2.5.2.2.1 From above-mentioned information and in consultation with prof A le R du Plooy, the Deputies recommend the following with regard to the situation in practice where reading services are concerned:

2.5.2.2.1.1 If there is no elder present at a reading service, the gathering can pass as a meeting of members without official supervision.

2.5.2.2.1.2 A female believer can lead a meeting as indicated in 2.5.2.2.1.1 above.

Decision: Approved – amendments already made - Deputies Acta.

2.5.2.2.2 The following guidelines are recommended by the Deputies to relieve the need in the churches:

2.5.2.2.2.1 In the light of the new grouping in Regional Synods and Classes neighbouring ministers should be encouraged to lead services at meeting points closeby.

2.5.2.2.2.2 Members who qualify should be encouraged to undergo theological training in order to become ministers of the Word.

2.5.2.2.2.3 Classes can request officiators of so-called “reading services” can receive training in accordance with the needs of circumstance.

2.5.2.2.2.4 Sermons can be made available for reading services by publishing more volumes of sermons and making sermons more accessible on the Internet. This can receive attention locally or in Classes.

2.5.2.2.2.5 Outlines of sermons can be made available that enable officiators of services to prepare for the service.

Decision: Note taken of 2.5.2.2.2 to 2.5.2.2.5.

2.5.3 Advice regarding the blessing

2.5.3.1 Matters that Synod should note

The existing decisions depart from the view that only a confirmed minister of the Word has the authority to pronounce the blessing. The officiator in a reading service may pronounce the blessing of the Lord when the congregation adjourns, but should suffice with the votum at the start of the service.

In this regard three matters come into focus: (1) the special service and the authority involved; (2) the blessing in the Old and New Testament and (3) the blessing in the reading service as service.

2.5.3.1.1 The special services and the authority involved

In Breed ao (2008:15, 16) the different words used in the Latin text of the Church Order of Dordt are discussed, followed by the statement: “All the words show that in the church the goal is humble service and not rule.” The **Deputaties Doctrinal Matters: Study group office of the elder** state in their Report the implications of the revelation of the New Testament regarding the service of the elder (the entire section was included as appendix 3): “This bibliological study shows that the service of elder entails a wide mandate of tasks. It seems bibliologically possible for an elder to receive specific specialised tasks within a congregation. The clear distinction between governing and teaching elder is not clear from a New Testamental perspective, and is probably a later development.” Van Ginkel (1975:31 ao) indicates that even the Reformation initially did not clearly distinguish the elder and the minister of the Word. According to him this has only been done since Wezel.

Research about the possible remnant of the Roman Catholic distinction: clergy and laymen (see Appendix 4) shows that the Reformation at least in principle breaks through the Roman Catholic distinction. In Scripture the different services are strongly described in terms of the actions, see Rom 12:6-8, and not as much by the position that the “office bearer” holds.

2.5.3.1.2 The blessing in the Old and New Testament (see Appendix 5 for a fuller explication)

The blessing was in **general use** in the Bible. Isaac (Gen 27:23, 27, 30, 33-36, 38, 41, also see ook Heb 11:20) and Jacob bless their sons (Gen 48:15; 48:9, 16, 20; 49:28). Jacob also blesses Joseph’s two sons (Gen 45:9, 16, 20). David blesses Abigail (1 Sam 25:33). Simeon blessis the family after the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:34). **All believers** receive the instruction in the New Testament to bless even those who persecute them (Rom 12:14) and those who curse them (Luke 11:28).

The blessing also occurs in the **formal gathering** of the people of God. The **priests** are instructed to pronounce the blessing (Num 6:22-27; also see 2 Cron 30:27). Yet **kings** also bless the people of God (David in 2 Sam 6:18 and

Solomon in 1 Kings 8:14; 2 Cron 6:3). In Ps 118:26 we see the **mutual blessing** between the **people and the priests**.

2.5.3.1.3 The blessing in the reading service

National Synod 1985 (p400, 1.3; also see **National Synod 1997:733, 3.1.3**) indicates both the continuity (see Acts 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4; 19:8), as well as the radical break (as is especially evident from the Christian liturgical actions at the baptism and the Holy Communion) between the synagogical and the Christian services. "The synagogical service especially influenced the development of the dialogical character of the Christian service. Furthermore, the elements of the reading of the law, Scripture reading and explication, prayer and blessing received a lasting place within the Christian service. See Appendix 6 for a fuller explanation.

Barnard (1981:100) describes the participants to the synagogical service as follows: "In contrast to the temple service that was exclusively carried by the Levite priesthood, the synagogue was carried by the congregation." He continues (p102): "The view of the synagogue as congregation house and the opportunity for the members to participate in the service, has taken over the Christian service."

The Gospel proclaimed in the synagogues and the homes:

The following parts of Scriptures testify of the proclamation of the gospel in the **synagogue**:

Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14, 15, 42, 43; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4

The following parts of Scriptures show that the gospel was also **proclaimed in the homes**: **Acts 5:42; 18:7, 8, 26; 20:20**

The congregation who gathers in the service does this as God's command. The promise of Christ is certainly also valid for the gathering of the congregation in a service: ... *where two or three gather in My Name, there I will be with them (Matt 18:20)*. The church who gathers to the glory of God, can count on His blessing presence.

2.5.3.1.3.1 The blessing in the service

- (a) With the pronunciation of the blessing the Source of it works grace and peace and when the authorised servant pronounces it over the congregation these gifts are bestowed on them
- (b) Grace indicates that the undeserved, even forfeited favour of God and peace creates a community that lives in harmony, love and happiness
- (c) The names with which God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ is described indicate who the Triune God is, how He is positioned with regard to the world, and how he acts.

2.5.3.1.3.2 The sending blessing in the service

- (a) The structure of the blessing in Numbers 6 and 2 Corinthians 13:13 has as purpose that the blessing should enter the hearts of the blessed powerfully so that the blessing can unfurl there and affect their practical life.
- (b) The blessing is pronounced on the people by the authorised (priests in the Old Testament and apostles in the New Testament) because it is God Himself who blesses them.
- (c) In the liturgical tradition of Israel the blessing served to send the worshippers back into the world blessingly and to serve as instrument for God's blessing reaching the nations of the world through his people.
- (d) With "protection", "grace", "peace", "love" and "community" the full wealth of God's gifts are bestowed on the people.

2.5.3.1.3.3 The history of the blessing

In the early church the catechumen and others were blessed by the bishop when they had to leave the first part of the service. The congregation was also blessed later on in the service. In the Middle Ages the blessing fell

away and was replaced by the mass that closes the gathering with its final words without a blessing being pronounced on the congregation. It is remarkable that only since the Reformation did the priestly blessing become part of the service again. The Reformers include the blessing again and combines it with the sending formula. In 1523 Luther brought back the Trinitarian and Aaronite blessing as sending blessing, and so an action starts that would become firmly rooted in the Protestant circles: Zwingli takes it over, and Bucer and Calvin uses the blessing of Numbers 6 to send the congregation away with a blessing (Acta, 1985:402): The Synod of Dordt 1574 prescribes it to the churches.

In the history of liturgy the blessing had different meanings and functions. In the Roman mass the blessing is understood as a wish, and in the Eastern liturgies it is seen as a prayer for the blessing of the Lord. In Reformational circles it is viewed as a promise from God through the mouth of the ordained shepherd and minister (Barnard, 1985:577). The precise view, according to the Reformers, is that it is a proclamation and pronouncement of the Lord's blessing that comes with the Origin of the blessing. The blessing is a gift, a *donation*, from the Lord that is proclaimed and promised to the congregation in His name. The Source of the blessing is the Triune God and He is the actual giver of the blessing. What He speaks, happens, and what He gives, is immediately active when it is taken in faith (Brienen, 1987:222). The blessing is laid on the congregation and the full work of God Triune is included in it. The blessing therefore does not work magically, but remains an authoritative message that has to be received by the believer (Barnard, 1985:577).

2.5.3.1.3.4 The blessing is essential for the life of the congregation

The congregation of Jesus Christ should receive the blessing of the Lord as indispensable gift during the service. Without this blessing communion with God and each other, certainty of faith and fulfilment of each person's calling in the world are not possible.

2.5.3.1.3.5 The blessing is essential for the further actions in the service

The greeting brings all the gifts to the congregation that enables members to participate to the service fruitfully.

2.5.3.1.3.6 The sending blessing sends believers as blessed to their world to fulfil their calling

The congregation is blessed to be sent back to their reality by God himself through the fact that He blesses them. Without the sending blessing the congregation can not fulfil their calling, especially to be followers of Christ.

2.5.3.1.3.7 The authority to pronounce the blessing of the Lord

There is full agreement that the minister of the Word is capable to pronounce the blessing of the Lord over the congregation. In 2.5.3.1.7.2 the current use of the **invocation** of the blessing is applied to the greeting and as alternative for this rather the **proclamation** of the blessing of the Lord.

2.5.3.1.3.7.1 Only the minister of the Word has the authority to pronounce the blessing

In the Old Testament only the persons in the office of priest had the authority to bless in the Name of the Lord, in the words that come directly from God. In the New Testament the blessing is also pronounced on the people by the authorised (apostles), and this emphasises that the blessing comes directly from God. In the letters of the apostles they clearly differentiate between prayers and blessings. The reformers of the sixteenth century saw the blessing as a pronouncement of the Lord through the mouth of the ordained shepherd and minister.

The one who pronounces the blessing is a mediator and he announces something, communicates it, without having the power to decree it. The called officiator leads as servant of God on the strength of the apostolate in

service of each congregation (see amongst other things Acts 3:11; 5:19, 20, 40-42; 6:2, 8; 9:15; 13:1,2; 14:22, 23; 15:22; 1 Cor 16:13-20, etc), and fulfils certain actions on the strength of calling and mission. This entails amongst other things greeting and the sending blessing and the ministry of the sacrament (Acta, 1997:732). The question is therefore whether the congregation should do without the blessing as promise if there is a called and authorised minister in the service, but he does not lead the minister and the other liturgical actions? The answer should be a definite “no”. From the legacy of the Reformation it is clear that one person does not have to handle all the actions in the service. There is also a significant difference between the effect on the life of the congregation when the blessing is invoked and when it is promised. Even if it is believed during the invocation of the blessing that the prayer would be heard, it does not have the authority of a blessing that is promised by an authorised minister of the Word. The authorised minister pronounces the blessing that comes directly from God authoritatively.

The decision of the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika does not doubt that where reading services are held, it is a service in the true sense of the word, but links the pronouncement of the blessing to the ministry of the Word, the preaching and ministry of sacraments.

2.5.3.1.3.7.2 The officiator at the reading service the blessing – see Appendix 7

The point of departure of this view is the definition of the service (see 2.5.1.1.3.3 above) that developed a dialogical character due to the synagogical heritage (Synod 1985:400). God initiates the meeting himself, and keeps the initiative throughout. He addresses the congregation and demands an answer of the congregation. Ultimately He also speaks the last word with the sending blessing that is pronounced over the gathered congregation in his Name. The guidelines for the service (Synods 1985 and 1997) addresses this.

According to existing decision and the current use in the Gereformeerde Kerke the officiator in a service, different than a minister of the Word, has the authority to pronounce the Lord’s blessing on the congregation. When someone different than a minister of the Word officiates in a servant, he as it were reads the sermon of a minister of the Word. Yet the church council gives him the authority to lead the service and he does this under the supervision of the church council.

Witvliet (2003) indicates that the confirmation of a minister of the Word with the laying on of hands means the recognition of a certain pastoral relationship and not the status of the person. He continues: “Reserving the greeting and benediction or certain gestures (such as the raising of arms) for the pastor is a provisional strategy chosen by a tradition, denomination, or congregation in order to heighten the significance of these words, to help people hear them as a here-and-now statement of God’s ever-present, ever-new promise.”

Nonetheless Witvliet’s (2003) answer to the question on the way in which an officiator that is not yet confirmed as a minister of the Word can give the blessing is as follows:

“Consider a simple reading of a scriptural blessing: Hear God’s promises, as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 5: ‘May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.’ Praise God for this sure promise.” Or consider a prayer for God’s blessing, such as a prayer based closely on Psalm 67: “Almighty God, be gracious to us and bless us and make your face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.”

This advice provides that the greeting can be given as promise, or by way of the reading of a part of Scripture during a reading service. The Deputies' recommended guidelines on this links to this.

The following **remarks** are valid:

(a) In the guidelines for liturgy (1985 and 1997) the promising of both the greeting and sending greeting takes place in the Name of the Lord, while the believer receives the Lord's promise. Where the blessing is invoked – like currently regarding the sending blessing – the words are those of the congregation and not the Lord. If the invocation with regard to the sending blessing is acceptable, there can be no fundamental objection against this also being the case with the greeting. From this the guideline as stated in 2.5.3.2.1.1.

(b) In both the case of the greeting and that of the sending blessing, the pronouncement of the blessing of the Lord by means of Scripture reading maintains the use of Scripture as it is recorded under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It also shows more clearly that the Alpha and the Omega (Rev 1:8) speaks the first (the votum) and the last word, also in the service. From there the guideline in 2.5.3.2.1.2 below.

2.5.3.1.3.8 The congregation should confirm and faithfully accept the blessing

It is necessary that the congregation faithfully accepts the blessing with an active action, namely by saying "amen" to it.

Decision: Note taken of 2.5.3.1 to 2.5.3.1.3.8.

2.5.3.2 Matters that synod should note

2.5.3.2.1 The Deputies recommend the following as guidelines for the invocation and proclamation of the blessing by an officiator at a reading service:

2.5.3.2.1.1 The invocation of the greeting by the officiator at the reading service can take place in the following way based on the way the sending blessing currently takes place:

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen" (1 Cor 1:3).

2.5.3.2.1.2 The proclamation/announcement of the blessing of the Lord from Scripture can for instance take place in the following manner:

2.5.3.2.1.2.1 Greeting

"Hear the promise of the Lord in 1 Cor 1:3 for this gathering:

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen" (1 Cor 1:3).

A more extensive part of Scripture from one of the letters can (with omission of the name of the congregation to whom the letter was originally directed) be used in the following manner:

"To the church of God ... , to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Cor 1:2, 3).

2.5.3.2.1.2.2 Sending blessing:

"Hear the assurance from the Lord in 2 Kor 13:14 with which we will live as his children:

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. "

Decision: Approved.

2.5.4 Advice regarding confirmation of office bearers and the confession of faith

2.5.4.1 Matters that Synod should note

2.5.4.1.1 The confirmations of office bearers

In terms of CO, art 22 elders (this is also valid for deacons) "are selected by the congregation under the guidance of the church council". After approbation they

are confirmed according to the formulary for this purpose. Bouwman (1928, dl. I: 408, 411) calls the confirmation of a minister the final closure on the calling that the minister is now accepting. During the confirmation his official duties are read to him. After his confirming answers on the questions, he is dedicated to the Lord in the execution of his duty (Bouwman, 1928, dl. I :408). This is all valid for the confirmation of both elders and deacons (Bouwman, 1928 – I :542).

The confirmation takes place in the gathering of the congregation (Spoelstra, 1989:140) and should flow from the church council and an officiator (Van't Spijker, quoted by Spoelstra, 1989:140). In terms of CO, art 37 the church council gathers under the chairmanship of the minister of the Word. Only the minister of the Word may confirm people in the offices based on this fact.

2.5.4.1.2 Confession of faith

In terms of the Church Order the ministers of the Word should see that parents of guardians ask for the baptism of their children (art 57) and should also serve the baptism with the use of the relevant formularies (art 58). Church Order, art 61 states that those are allowed to the Holy Communion who “have made a **confession of the Reformed faith** according to the traditions of the local congregation ...” Bouwman (1928, dl. II:368) says that Confession of faith is fundamentally a confirmation of the doctrine. He emphasis the necessity of a joyful faith in that which God reveals in his Word and the public declaration of an intention to serve and fear Christ as Saviour. Confession of faith may not be separated from the personal faith and conversion (Bouwman, 1928, dl. II:370).

Spoelstra (1989:340) indicates that the Synod of 1863 initially did not want to instate any formulary of questions, it was left to the freedom of the local church. However, Synod 1876 did instate a formulary due to the “*ongeloof en lichtzinnigheid dezer dage*”.

Different from the Roman Catholic Church the Confession of faith is not a sacrament. The baptised member that confesses his/her faith is not adopted, presented or confirmed “as member”. It is not even their formal joining as member of the church (Bouwman, 1928, dl. II:368). Spoelstra (1989:339) states it as follows: “Confession of faith opens ... the participation to the ‘full communion of the people of God’ and with that goes the enjoyment of the rights and privileges that the Lord gave in his sacraments. Confession of faith takes the baptised Christian out from the religious care of his parents and he steps forward independently and responsibly. The membership in the body of Christ comes to the fore in the express entry to the Holy Communion.”

According to Bouwman (1928, dl. II:372) the confession of faith was to the old reformed believers nothing else that the allowance to the Holy communion. He refers to Heidelberg Catechism, Sun 30:81 where it is stated that those who come to the Communion table of the Lord, “They who due to their sin loath themselves, but still trust that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake and that the weaknesses that remain, are covered with his suffering and death; and those who desire to strengthen their faith and improve their lives.”

Synod 1961 makes (according to Spoelstra, 1981:341) the following statement on the Holy Communion as a demonstration of ecumenical unity: “The Holy Communion is a matter of the *local church*, where the Church Council supervises the entrance to it.” In practice an elder can give permission that a believer in another church participates in the Holy Communion or can approach a Church Council to gain testimony regarding a request to use the Holy Communion in order to enable the Church Council to make a responsible decision (Spoelstra, 1989:341). Commissions can also investigates persons who want to be allowed into the church community. Their finding on the person’s doctrine, life and reason for coming their should be repoted to the Church Council, after which the Church Council can accept such a person.

Iemand wat in die openbaar Belydenis van geloof aflê of in die kerk opgeneem word, verkry nie permanente toegang tot die heilige Nagmaal nie. Die onderlinge goeie getuienis is onontbeerlik vir die heiligheid van die Nagmaal. Die ouderlinge moet op sterkte van die getuienis tot die Nagmaal “toelaat” of van die Nagmaal afhou (KO, art 76. Vgl Spoelstra, 1989:336).

Daar is geen voorskrif in die Kerkorde of belydenis dat die aflegging van Belydenis van geloof slegs deur ’n bedienaar van die Woord en slegs in ’n erediens hanteer moet word nie. Bouwman (1928, dl. II:380) stel die volgende ten opsigte van die wyse waarop die Belydenis van geloof hanteer moet word: “Zeer veel moet aan de vrijheid der kerken, aan de gewoonte en de omstandigheden worden overgelaten.”

In die lig van die voorafgaande kom die Deputate tot die gevolgtrekking dat net soos dit die voorganger in ’n leesdiens geoorloof is om voor te gaan in die gemeenskaplike Geloofsbelydenis in die samekoms, dit hom geoorloof kan wees om ook die individuele, openbare aflegging van Belydenis van geloof te hanteer.

Decision: Kennis geneem van 2.5.4.1.1 en 2.5.4.1.2.

2.5.4.2 Matters that synod should note

2.5.4.2.1 With regard to the confirmation of office bearers the Deputies recommend that only a minister of the Word may confirm people in the special services.

2.5.4.2.2 With regard to the Confession of Faith the Deputies recommend that the officiator at a reading service can handle this after the preceding instruction and questioning by the Church Council.

Decision: Approved – amendments already made – Deputies Acta.

2.5.5 Advice with regard to the use of audio-visual aids

2.5.5.1 Matters that Synod should note

The use of audio-visual aids are valid for both the reading service and the service where a minister of the Word officiates.

2.5.5.1.1 Possibilities of audio-visual aids

Audio-visual aids offer the possibility that a service can be broadcast live via the Internet or a landline (or even digitally), or can be recorded and later shown. Last-mentioned can be a video-, CD or DVD recording. These aids are already used in with great benefit several places (for instance Agulhas, Okahandja and Pinetown). In Appendix 8 below technical details are provided on the manner in which the audio-visual aids can be used.

Noticable God decided in his wisdom that the “*fulness of time*” (Gal 4:4) is not the current time with all the possibilities that the media offers. It should be remembered: *The Word became flesh and lived amongst us (John 1:14)*. Paul did communicate with believers by means of letters. Normally this was only after had established a church in a certain place by means of personal contact and then for the benefit for the people who came to the faith through the personal relationship between people (Van der Merwe, 1993:36; 280).

Of importance here is the service as threefold meeting (see the definition of a service, 2.5.1.1.3.3 above) that is practiced dynamically (in Spirit and truth) (Acta, 1997:737 ao; also see the emphasis on the necessity of a dynamic liturgy for the spontaneous African language speaker – 2.5.1.1.2.2 above). The believers should fulfil their calling after the service, namely to be witnesses of Christ (see 2.5.3.1.3.6 above).

2.5.5.1.2 Possible limitations unique to audio-visual aids

(a) The cell phone with *Mxit*, the Internet with *Facebook* etc, means that the communicator can take a fictitious personality. He becomes a virtual person who communicates with other virtual persons in the virtual world of the cell phone and computer.

(b) The abuse of the electronic media causes that there can certainly be a degree of distrust with the participant in such kinds of communication.

- (c) A service in which a believer takes part via an audio-visual aid, lacks the living community between believers. The gathered congregation in any case misses the community with such a believer.
- (d) It is possible to use these aids in service of the gospel, but it is difficult, because the medium is so powerful and can so easily misconstrue the message (Van der Merwe, 1993:280 – specifically on radion and TV).

Decision: Note taken of 2.5.1.1 and 2.5.5.1.2.

2.5.5.2 Matters that synod should note

2.5.5.2.1 The Deputies recommend that the following be used as general guidelines with regard to audio-visual aids in the service

- (a) The service as threefold gathering may take place through a medium. This has special use for training believers. In addition it is also useful as first contact between believers mutually, or between believers and people who have not yet been reached by the Gospel. However, it should also surpass the world of the aids; personal contact is crucial, whether before or after the gathering by means of the aid.
- (b) Personal involvement also promotes the continuation of the gospel. It has important implications for the frontier churches. Amongst other things it can not be accepted that a church that is only served through the media will expand. In order to ensure the continuation of the gospel, at least the minister of the Word should make contact with members in person.
- (c) Aids ... can be used meaningfully as long as it is viewed as an aid for the church in its personal testimony in this world (Van der Merwe, 1993:279 – on radio and TV).
- (d) The service may not be individualised by members each tuning into the service at their own homes. Care should be taken that it does not become a virtual church with a virtual service. This would harm the essence of the service.
- (e) Believers who are isolated for some reason, can tune into the service in this manner.

2.5.5.2.2 The Deputies recommend that the following practical guidelines are followed when aids are used in the service

- 2.5.5.2.2.1 The recording of a sermon by a minister of the Word can be played just as it can be read.
- 2.5.5.2.2.2 The service should at all times be a lively and dynamic gathering, also when audio-visual aids are used. This is especially important in the African language speaking communities that places value on sponteneity and dynamics.
- 2.5.5.2.2.3 In order to promote dynamics, only the sermon can be offered by means of an audio-visual aid, while someone present leads the rest of the service.
- 2.5.5.2.2.4 The officiator can consult the full liturgy of the original service in his preparation for the relevant service, but should not be limited to this.
- 2.5.5.2.2.5 M.b.t. die beskikbaarstelling van opnames van eredienste die volgende:
 - (a) Churches can take the responsibility of making sound and audio-visual recordings regularly that can be used at meeting points where a minister of the Word can not be present.
 - (b) Where necessary members can be trained to record sermons and to use the electronic media at the receiving end.
 - (c) TV's and CD-players are readily available. There can be assistance in Classes to make electronic aids such as DVD-players and computers available.

Decision: 2.5.5.2.1 to 2.5.5.2.2.5 is approved.

F. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

1. Matters that the Synod can take note of

1.1 *Selection of Confessional songs*

In the Report of the Deputy Group Liturgical Matters to Synod 2009 it was mistakenly mentioned the dr AGS Venter's versification of Sunday 20 of the Heidelberg Catechism is recommended for use in services of the GKSA (3.2.2.1 of the Report).

This versification was in fact referred back to the sub-Commission who evaluated it, because certain aspects of Sunday 20 do not appear in the versification satisfactorily.

This versification is therefore not currently recommended for use in services of the GKSA.

Decision: Take note.

2. Matters for decision by the Synod

2.1 *Selection of Confessional Songs and Scriptural Hymns*

2.1.1 A Confessional song by prof Leendert Dekker (Sunday 1), as well as Scriptural hymns by Johannes Bingle (Isa 6:1b-4) and dr AP van der Colf (Heb 1) have not been finally evaluated and concluded.

The Deputies recommend that the Deputy Group for Liturgical Matters named by Synod 2009 continue with the final evaluation and conclusion of the mentioned songs, as well as dr AGS Venter's versification of Sunday 20 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Decision: The appointment of Deputies is approved with the following assignments:

- 1. The new songs should be place in the correct place in the rubrication of the Scriptural Hymns.**
- 2. With the publication of the Psalm Book attention should be paid to the correct rubrication of the Scriptural Hymns.**
- 3. To formulat a more comprehensive and expanded principle guideline against which new songs can be measured and tested.**
- 4. To note their application of the guidelines (Acta 2006:570-571), as approved (Acta 2006:557, D3) for every song and to use this as the feedback document.**