

22.3 REPORT: DEPUTIES DOCTRINAL (SUB GROUP: HYMN) – SCRIPTURALLY AND CONFSSIONALLY RELIABLE HYMN (Artt 80, 212, 222, 223)

- A. Rev HLJ Momberg presents the Report.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to the Commission Liturgical Matters 2.
- C. Rev LJ Buys reports on behalf of the Commission Liturgical Matters 2.
- D. **Decision:** In light of the discussion this report is referred to an ad hoc commission for reformulation of a proposal while taking into account the thoughts expressed at Synod. Members of the Commission are: eld F Venter (s), de LJ Buys, HMP van Rhyn, dr HG Stoker, rev P Venter, dr JF Fatuse and rev LH Moretsi. Advisors are proff A le R du Plooy and TD Mashau.
- E. Rev P Venter reports on behalf of the ad hoc commission.

F. REPORT

1. Matters that Synod should note

1.1 *Assignment (Acta 2006:571)*

- 1.1.1 The nature of the assignment given to the Deputies by Synod is not normal in the sense that it is not essentially a study assignment that was referred to the Deputies.
 - 1.1.1.1 In 2003 two Petitions of Protest were tabled which requested that CO art 69 should be expanded so that “other” hymns may also be sung in church (Acta 2003:502, 512).
 - 1.1.1.2 These Petitions of Protest were rejected by Synod 2003.
 - 1.1.1.3 Synod gave the contents of these as study assignment to the Study Deputies.
 - 1.1.1.4 Their Report (Deputies Doctrinal) served in 2006 (Acta 2006:557) and is included below (cf. 1.3).
 - 1.1.1.5 Synod 2006 referred this report for recommendation to a Commission. This unpublished Commission Report is also included below (cf. 1.3).
 - 1.1.1.6 Due to time constraints at Synod 2006 this matter could not be finalized and it was therefore referred to the Deputies.
- 1.1.2 The Deputies decided that the Deputies Report and the unpublished Commission Report that served at Synod 2006 take cognisance of the Petitions of Protest of 2003 adequately and they were therefore not taken *de novo* by these Deputies for treatment.
- 1.1.3 Accepting 1.1.2. entails that these Deputies took their assignment to mean that they had to adjudicate the contents of the Deputies Report (2006) as well as the unpublished Commission Report (2006) in order to make a recommendation to Synod 2009.

1.2 *The matter concerned*

- 1.2.1 This matter deals on the one hand with the Reformed view that in our churches we sing those hymns of which the text can be found in the Bible and on the other hand whether we may also sing those that embody the doctrinal, confessional-historical threads and thoughts of Scripture. Should this route be adopted it will necessarily have the consequence that CO art 69 will have to be altered.

1.3 *Comparative presentation of Reports (Synod 2006)*

- 1.3.1 The Deputies consider as vital to compare the said two Reports with the aim of making it possible for Synod to adjudicate the matter properly. The original editing and numbering of both reports were retained consistently. **The unpublished Commission Report which comments in each case on every aspect of the Deputies Report has been included in boxes below.**

Decision: Noted 1.1.1 to 1.3.1.

*****DEPUTIES- AND COMMISSION REPORT OF SYNOD 2006 STARTS HERE*****

1. Assignment

- 1.1 National Synod GKSA 2003 referred two matters to these Deputies namely
1.1.1 The two Petitions of Protest of Particular Synod Randvaal about CO art 69 (cf. artt 21.4 and 21.5; Acta 2003:502-527).

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2.4 Aanbevelings

2.4.1 SAKE OM VAN KENNIS TE NEEM (AA 15.18 P 700) Deputate Leerstellig – Skrif- en belydenisgetroue lied

2.4.1.1 Die Deputate het hulle opdrag so verstaan om alleen kennis te neem van die twee Beswaarskrifte van Part Sinode Randvaal. Dit blyk in lyn te wees met die besluite van 2003 p512 artikel 6.3, en p527 punt I. Die Sinode 2003 het nie gevolg gegee aan die Beswaarskrifte nie, maar dit verwys na die Deputate om in ag te neem met hulle studie.

2.4.1.2 Die Sinode neem kennis van die studie gedoen deur die Deputate Leerstellig.

- 1.1.2 Decision 6.2.2, Acta 2003:645, about Report Deputies Liturgical Matters.
These Deputies understood their assignment to be as follows: to advise Synod after further study about the serviceability of Scripturally- and Confessionally Reliable hymns in churches (including church services). We did not view it as our duty to adjudicate both Petitions of Protest as the provisional study piece of the Deputies Liturgical Matters (cf. decision 6.2.2, Acta 2003:645) but indeed to take thorough notice of its contents.
The execution of the results and principled indicators below.

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1. OPDRAG

1.2 Uitvoering van die opdrag

1.2.1 Deurdat hierdie Studierapport eers uitgedeel is met die Aanvullende Agenda, het dit die beoordeling van die Rapport bemoeilik.

1.2.2 U Kommissie het dus punte aangestip wat ons as leemtes beskou het in die Rapport en wat na ons mening die wese van die Rapport raak.

1.2.3 Die Kommissie het hulle beredeneringe van die Rapport ingedeel onder die volgende hoofde: Eksegetiese en teologiese aspekte, historiese en kerkregtelike aspekte en ander oorwegings.

2. BEREDENERING

2.1 Die Deputate Leerstellig het opdrag gehad om die hele saak van Skrif- en Belydenisgetroue liedere in die erediens te ondersoek, en om riglyne te stel vir Skrif- en Belydenisgetroue liedere asook belydenis-identieke en belydenis-berymde liedere.

2.2 Die Deputate het hierdie opdrag uitgevoer en kom gevolglik met aanbevelings dat KO, art 69 gewysig moet word: *“In die kerke sing ons Skrif- en belydenis-identieke, Skrif- en Belydenis-berymde en Skrif- en Belydenis-getroue liedere.”*

2.3 Vir duidelikheid word ook die definisie van 'n Skrifgetroue lied gegee (Handelinge 2003:664): *“Hierdie lied is 'n toonsetting van 'n vrye lied wat getrou is aan die boodskap van die Skrif. 'n Mens sou dit ook 'n Skrifmatige lied kon noem (bv. Skrifberyming 26:11; 49; 50 en talle gesange).”*

2.4 Die Kommissie het uitgegaan van die feit dat die Sinode nog nie sy goedkeuring verleen het vir die wysiging van KO, art 69 nie.

2.5 Die Kommissie is van oordeel dat die voorgestelde wysiging van KO, art 69 belangrike veranderinge sal meebring vir die Gereformeerde Kerke se siening van die kerklied, en was van mening dat die Sinode hiervan deeglik kennis sal neem.

2. Selected Scriptural facts in light of the question about Scripturally and Confessionally Reliable hymns

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2.2.1 EKSEGETIESE AND TEOLOGIESE ASPEKTE

2.2.1.1 Daar bestaan 'n leemte in die eksegetiese gedeelte van die studie deurdat alleen selektiewe bronne aangehaal is wat 'n bepaalde standpunt ondersteun, nl. die van Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue hymnere. Geen bronne is aangehaal wat die teendeel bewys nie.

2.1 *Old Testament*

2.1.1 The Temple service

The Old Testament temple cult was characterized by singing and instrumental music among others. The God of the Covenant of Israel was the content and the direction of the people's song. Cult singing of the Old Testament temple service was typically psalm singing with reference to the canonical Book of Psalms. Although the 150 Psalms developed over the ages, they were consistently used in this cult as a basis for singing. It was organized under supervision of the so-called Liturgical office bearers or singers' guilds, for example the Asaphites and Korahites. Some Psalms could have developed in the context of guilds with a view to cult or corporate use. Cult singing in Israel wanted to communicate vertically and horizontally. It wanted to be prayer and propagation of Jahwe and his deeds. Apparently it had only a serving function: service to the revelation of the Word (Strydom, 1994:9-13).

2.1.2 The Synagogue service

This developed alongside the temple cult and enjoyed its own nature and function. It appears that it emerged in exile when Israel was cut off from the temple. It continued to grow in the subsequent centuries and was aimed primarily at teaching from Scriptures and prayer. It took the form of systematic readings from the torah, prophets, and Scriptures, accompanied by its translation (in Aramic spoken language) and explication. These readings and translations were accompanied by predetermined prayers. Other actions were: congregational response ("amen," "halleluyah," doxologies) and an element of confession (cf. Deut 6:4). The sequence of scriptural readings were interspersed with psalm singing. The manner was mostly speech-singing i.e. the pronouncing of certain pericopes in a heightened speech tone. Apparently the aesthetics of singing were not a priority in these services. Antiphony also characterized all folk singing since the earliest days. It was the influence of humanism and rationalism (16th/ 17th C) which brought an end to this habit (Strydom, 1994:14-16).

The nature of singing in these services was mainly scriptural pericopes, Psalms and "cantica" (scriptural hymns) recited by a lead singer by means of speech-song. The atmosphere of the text determined the speech melody. Sometimes the melodies slanted towards speech and sometimes towards music (Strydom, 1994:15).

2.2 *New Testament*

2.2.1 New Liturgy

Viljoen (1990:6) conveys that the gospel of Jesus Christ and the resultant joy were expressed in the singing of hymns (cf. Acts 2:46-47; 1 Cr 14:15b-26). It appears that to give expression to their new praise the first Christians used the Psalms of the Septuaginta as their first book of songs.

Destruction of the temple in 70 AD brought an end to the temple cult. Christians were gradually banned from synagogues as well. Though the New Testament offers no report about the Liturgical procedure of the very first Christian services it appears that they had indeed developed their own liturgy consisting of praise, prayer, and education. Communal praise introduced the service. Viljoen (1990:7) is of the opinion that these elements were derived from the Talmud, which determines that praise should precede prayer. The adoption of this procedure may be the foundation for 1

Corinthians 14:26, which mentions that the congregation of the Corinthians introduced collective praise with a Psalm of praise.

According to Strydom (1994:21) Paul's letters (1 Cor 14:15, 26; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) and James (5:13) mention specific assignments with regard to religious singing, although not always with pertinent reference to gatherings of the congregations. Strydom especially makes basic inferences from these pronouncements and they can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Singing is a spontaneous religious expression among Christians at their meetings (1 Cor 14:15, 26).
- (b) It is an expression of joy, praise, and giving thanks. It is therefore directed towards God.
- (c) The hymn also aims at creating cohesion (1 Cor 14:15-17, 26), at speaking among one another (Eph 5:19), and is a medium of reciprocal teaching and admonition (Col 3:16 ff).
- (d) It is the way to and fruit of fulfilment with the Spirit (Eph 5: 18, 19).
- (e) Paul refers to the fact that Psalms, praise songs and other spiritual hymns must be sung (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). These terminologies in all likelihood refer to a fullness and variety of hymns and talk of the comprehensive praise of people filled with God.

2.2.2 Ephesians 3:16 and Colossians 5:19

In the broad context of these two books it is clear that these verses both fall under the imperative rubric of the letters that follow on the indicative of the first couple of chapters. The instruction in these imperative parts is to allow yourself to be filled by the Spirit just as it is imperative to follow the dictates of marriage (Eph 5:22). The result of this Spirit-fulfilment is spirited singing in honour of the Lord by means of psalms, hymns, and other spiritual songs in which the honouring of God (doxological character) and the instruction of one another (didactic character)/ stirring and admonishment of one another (pastoral or paraclitic character) are foregrounded.

Colossians 3:16 conveys that the congregation should teach and educate one another in all wisdom. This can find manifestation only by indwelling of the message of Christ. The manners in which teaching should occur is by means of the singing of psalms, hymns, other spiritual songs (O'Brien, 1982:207-208). Syntactically the Greek is slightly problematic, but it proposes on solid grounds that singing of these kinds of songs is indeed related to "teaching and edification" since the prepositional phrases that precede the auxiliary word phrases are clear markers that divide the sentence in two separate "imperatives/ instructions." This view is supported by the parallel part in Ephesians 5:19 in which, interestingly, there is the suggestion of "*Speak to one another by singing psalms*".

An important parallel between the two verses under examination is that when they are read together the clear link between Word and Spirit is highlighted. Eph 5:19 suggests fulfilment with the Spirit and Col 3:16 fulfilment by the Word. The wide variety of songs that could be suggested here do have these factors in common, namely that they are the result of these two forms of fulfilment.

About the suggestion of three song categories in these texts divergent opinions exist. The question begs whether it is so that in the historical world of the hymn materials of the New Testament different kinds of song existed and whether the two verses indicate such differences.

Bingle (2000:76) considers the possibility that these verses do not indicate such differences, but rather a diversity of songs. He distinguishes between the three terms in the following manner:

- (a) At first glance it may be accepted that the word "*psalmois*" refers in this instance to the Old Testament psalms, but the term can be used more widely to indicate songs or music or praise (Viljoen, 2001:438). In Hellenic culture psalms often indicated singing, accompanied by one or more string instruments. "*Psaloo*" literally means to pluck hair or feathers. The concept was

transferred to the habit of plucking harpsichord strings which brought forth the sound accompanying singing (O'Brien, 1982:209). 1 Cor 14:26 is a case in which "psalm" quite probably indicates a newly versified song of praise, inspired by the Spirit and sung with gratefulness that suits a member of the congregation of Christ, instead of indicating a volume of psalms in the Old Testament.

- (b) "*Humnois*" is a common Biblical literature that specifically indicates festive singing of praise (O'Brien, 1982:209) although it indicates on two occasions in the New Testament an expression of praise for the God of Christ.
- (c) "Other spiritual songs" (*oidais*) is used in the New Testament mainly as songs in which God's actions are described and sung about (O'Brien, 1982:209).

In short and in summary (cf. Bingle, 2000:76-77):

- (a) Old Testament Psalms (or songs that enjoy Psalms as preceding prototypes);
- (b) More free, less common songs that reflect Old Testament Psalms less directly (thus being "neologisms" to a larger degree which reflect trust in need and anxiety);
- (c) Spontaneous, more common reactions (also less directly relevant to Old Testament Psalms).

Viljoen (1990:7) writes that the New Testament church already began creating new songs in light of the extended revelation and that the differing terms in the said two verses give testimony to the rich hymnographic activity of the first congregations.

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2.2.1.2 [Die aanhaal van selektiewe bronne] word bewys deurdat die gevolgtrekkings op grond van die eksegeese van the Deputate Liturgies verskil. The Deputate Doktrinaal sien in Efesiërs 5:19 and Kolossense 3:16 Skriftuurlike motivering vir die sing van Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue liedere, terwyl Deputate Liturgies meen hierdie tekste gebied of verbied nie Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue liedere nie. Totius deel 7 (1962:136, 137) merk by die bespreking van Efesiërs 5:18 and Kol 3:16 op: "... die Nuwe Testament ook geen voorbeeld gee van 'n 'vrye kerklied' wat in die eerste kerk gesing is. Met ander woorde, die beroep op die Heilige Skrif ten gunste van die vrye kerklied gaan nie op nie.

2.2.3 Sing a "new song"

As mentioned, believers of the New Testament wanted to bring new praise to God thanks to the new joy that the gospel of Christ had brought. When Rev 5:9 and 14:3 mention a "new song" the question arises if the new song of Revelations can act as a guideline or directive as to the nature of the scope of the church hymn.

In ancient Greek literature a *topos* exists that new songs are better; not only new songs, but new ways of singing (Aune, 1997:360).

In the Old Testament the phrase "new song" occurs in quite a number of instances (Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isi 42:10) where it introduces the celebration of a special occasion or the description of new situations in which the traditional hymns were thought of as inadequate in respect of properly praising the new and great intervention and revelation by and of God (Viljoen 1990:155). There this phrase occurs in formulae which are sometimes characterized by the escatological, concomitant with the idea that the "new song" sings unto and praises God's redemptive actions (Aune, 1997:359).

In respect of the "new song" in Revelations the opinion exists that it belongs under the rubric of a "holy war" terminology. In this regard ancient military victories were celebrated in song (cf. 2 Chron 20:27-28). Although this is a rare phenomenon, Ps 144:9-10 provides an example of a new song being sung in order to celebrate a victory (Aune, 1998:808).

Viljoen (1990:155) states that the word "new" occurs repeatedly in Revelations in contexts such as the "new name" (Rev 2:17; 3:12), the "new Jerusalem" (Rev 3:12; 21:2), the "new heaven and the new earth" (Rev 21:2) and that God will make everything "new" (Rev 21:5). Both "*kainos*" and "*neos*" are used. The former indicates

quality and the latter time. The new song in Revelations is therefore the expression of those freed by the Lamb's blood. His redemptive deeds created a new situation which brings about an eruption of praise. No other (old) hymn which was originally meant for this situation sufficed completely to bring the new praise to expression. Viljoen succinctly says: "The Old Testament hymns find their fulfilment in the salvation of Jesus Christ. New hymns are sung as a result of the extended revelation in Jesus, but these connect with the extant ones. The praise of God's people of the Old Testament "meets" the praise of the four living creatures and the twenty four elders." Viljoen (1990:155-156) describes the theme of the new song (Rev 5:9) as similar to most New Testament Christ-hymns. It focuses on Jesus's death, its universal redemptive significance, the glorification of Jesus, his exaltedness above all heavenly powers and created things and that He is the throne partner of God. With this utterance of praise the millions of millions of angels agree and they erupt in praise of the entire creation (Rev 5:13).

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2.2.1.4 Volgens the Deputate se eksegese (p703, art 2.2.3) van die woord "nuut" in "nuwe lied" kan ons vandag 'n "nuwe lied" dig na aanleiding van die groot daade van God. Nuwe lied sou dus hier staan as goedkeuring vir 'n Skrifgetroue lied. C Westermann deel 1 (1997:397) verklaar in sy Teologiese woordeboek dat die woord "nuut" soos bv gebruik in die Psalms nie die betekenis het van 'n nuwe teks of melodie nie, maar dat die groot daade van God in ons sang weerklank moet vind.

2.3 *Conclusion*

- 2.3.1 Singing played a prominent role as supplement to propagation of the Word already in synagogues and temples – in other words: where God's omnipotence is declared, this occurred. These hymns, based largely on the volume of psalms of the Old Testament, sung unto situations in which God is the triumphant Lord or King of his covenantal people.
- 2.3.2 The New Testament describes the impact of the joyous message of God's new miracles in and through Christ. This gives rise to the need for praise. In this respect the two verses here describe the nature and extent of hymns sung by believers. These have the purpose of edifying and admonishing one another. The Spirit and the Word guide the singing of these. Where the Word, through the action of the Spirit, is the inspiration for the singing, it can serve as a measurement in the compilation of new hymns aiming at 1) praising God (doxologically) and 2) teaching one another (didactically) and admonishing one another (paracletically). These new hymns are based on God's revelation through Christ and in this way they are the manifestation of new praise by believers.

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2.2.1.3 The Deputate se gevolgtrekking (p703, art 2.3.2) skep verwarring as die woord "inspirasie" gebruik word. Indien daarmee bedoel word dat ons liedere wat deur die Gees geïnspireer is vandag kan maak, onafhanklik van die Woord, verval die onderskeid tussen Kanon and nie-Kanon.

3. Some lines about the Scripturally and Confessionally Reliable free hymn in the history of the Church

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2.2.2 Historiese and kerkregtelike aspekte – artikel 69 KO

2.2.2.1 'n Leemte in die studie is dat dit gedoen is vanuit 'n gesigspunt waarin alleen gekyk is na die herkoms, moontlikhede and kriteria vir die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied. Op grond daarvan kom the Deputate met 'n aanbeveling om KO, art 69 te wysig. Daar is geen verweer voorsien vir die behoud van KO, art 69 in sy huidige vorm nie.

2.2.2.2 Die studie vra gevolglik vir 'n wesentlike wysiging van KO, art 69 sonder grondige inagneming van die kerkhistoriese agtergrond waarom KO, art 69 in die Kerkorde opgeneem is.

2.2.2.3 Die wesenlike aspek van KO, art 69 wat geraak sal word deur die voorgestelde wysiging daarvan, is dat die Gereformeerde Kerke 'n ander benadering sal volg ten opsigte van die beginsel wat vir die kerklied gegeld het.

3.1 *Dotted lines and points of departure*

3.1.1 Some perspectives

The couple of perspectives given here via the Church history should be viewed as dotted lines with a view to the Deputies' assignment. Within these limitations a great many relevant considerations naturally have to be passed by. Only a few selected points are highlighted.

3.1.2 Definition by Synod 2003

Synod 2003's "definition" (their own term) of this kind of hymn as a "free hymn that is true to the message of Scripture", gives a clear focus to this input.

3.1.3 New sources

As *point of departure* for the course of the church history facts are taken from a manuscript exploited as an authentic source for liturgical-historical research by Protestants only in the late nineteenth century (Fischer, 1970:112-113): *The seven letters of Ignatius of Antiochia (approx 110 AD)*. It is remarkable that this is one of the early Christian manuscripts that was not available to someone like Calvin along with others such as the *Didachè, approximately 100 AD* – although he wanted to arrange liturgy in accordance with the habit of the "*l'église ancien*" (the old church). The liturgical expert Jonker (s.a.: 19; cf. Strydom, 1994:25 – emph. added) rightfully states: "Thanks to research over the last century we know more about the time of the ur-congregation than Calvin could in his time." This fact should be thoroughly accounted for in the context of the discussion here.

3.2 *The distinction between the Scripturally reliable prayer hymn and the propagatory/ didactic/ confessional hymn*

In the letter of *Ignatius to the Ephesians* **two** kinds of hymns occur that were known in the early church directly after the time of the New Testament (cf. Hamman, 1971:18, about Ignatius's status in churches of those days): a prayer hymn as well as a propagatory/didactic/confessional one (cf. *To the Ephesians* 4.2 viz. prayer hymn; and 4.1, 7.2, viz. the other forms mentioned). At the hand of this distinction a couple of perspectives throughout church history are subsequently stipulated.

3.3 *The Scripturally and Confessionally Reliable prayer hymn*

3.3.1 Legitimate distinction between Scripturally reliable prayer and Scripturally versified prayer hymn?

Public prayer takes the form of *speech prayers* and *song prayers* (Calvin, *Inst*, 3.20.31). The question arises: can it be legitimately determined that the former may indeed be reliable and free, while the latter must only reiterate or versify only **certain parts of Scripture**? The distinction has been questioned heavily through the centuries – also by Christians underwriting the *sola Scriptura* principle of the Reformation wholeheartedly. Kuyper (1911:58) for example entertains the view that there is **no command** in Scripture to sing exclusively versified prayer songs in church services, although he regards it as the better option. He also acknowledges that there

is **no command** prohibiting Scripturally reliable prayer hymns. If the habit that prayer songs must only be versifications from Scripture is taken consistently then it must, according to Kuyper (1911:53), surely **also** be true in the case of speech prayers. “That alone would be the strict consequence.” [“Dat alleen zou de strenge consequentie zijn.”]

Church history must work towards a true “catholic-reformed” answer to the question at the beginning of this paragraph. In this we can fruitfully follow the great Reformed theologian, Herman Bavinck (1968:10-11; emphasis added), with his notion of the catholicity of the church:

“This catholicity of the church both when it comes to the Scriptures that she sketches for us and the first congregation that she shows us, is of breathtaking beauty. Those who lock themselves up in the restricted circle of a little church or conventional do not know her and have not ever in their lives experienced her power and comfort. Such persons come short of the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the community of the Spirit; he bereaves himself from spiritual treasures that cannot be compensated for by meditation or devotion, and impoverishes his soul. But those who see outside across the countless crowd bought from all nations and countries by the Son’s blood ... these cannot be narrow of heart, these do not remain tight in their guts.”

[“Deze katholiciteit der kerk, gelijk de Schriften ze ons tekenen and de eerste gemeente ze ons tonen, is van aangrijpende schoonheid. Wie in de enge kring van een kerkje of conventikel zich opsluit, kent haar niet and heeft haar kracht and vertroosting nooit in zijn leven ervaren. Zo iemand doet aan de liefde van de Vader, aan de genade van de Zoon, aan de gemeenschap van de Geest tekort; hij berooft zichzelf van geestelijke schatten, die door geen meditatie of devotie kan worden vergoed and verarmt zijn ziel. Maar wie uitzienende naar buiten over de ontelbare schare heen, die uit alle volk and land and tijd door het bloed van de Zoon is gekocht ... die kan niet eng zijn van hart, die blijft in zijn ingewande niet nauw.”]

3.3.2 Two kinds of Scripturally reliable prayer hymns

Throughout church history at least **two kinds** of these can be distinguished: on the one hand a *direct* prayer hymn (the Trinity, or specifically to Father, Son, Holy Ghost); and on the other a *mediated* prayer hymn to the Father, through/in/with the Son and in/through the Holy Spirit.

The direct prayer hymn

3.3.2.1.1 To the Trinity

One of the best known among these is the last verse of ***Christe qui lux est et dies*** (“Christ who is the light and day”), which probably emerged in the 6th C. It was also translated in Afrikaans as “*Skrifberyming*” 20-2 in the GKSA Psalm Book. Earlier this was the *only Scripturally reliable hymn from the first centuries* used by the Reformed in Holland in church services (Van Andel, 1988:24). It is a free hymn “in the fullest sense of the word” [“in den meest volledige zin van het word”] – which was sung freely by our Reformed forefathers in the church service (Kuyper, 1911:58). [The question as to how and why it was placed in the GKSA Psalm Book under the rubric “*For household use*” [“*Vir huislike gebruik*”] could not be traced.]

3.3.2.1.2 To the Father

Different hymns from the ***Odes of Solomon*** can be mentioned here. This work is typified as “this oldest of Christian hymnals” (Old, 1992:68). It probably dates back to the years prior to 135 AD. Indeed, with reference to **reformational debates** about the church hymn we too should find it “distressing” (Charleston, 1989:283-284) that so little attention has been given in particular to “Christian Psalms” (Old,

1992:96). Consider for example of a direct prayer hymn the conclusion of *Ode Eleven*:

“Glory belongs to Thee, o God, the Joy of paradise eternally. Halleluyah.”

This entire *Ode* is a typical Scripturally reliable hymn. No direct Scriptural references that qualify as citations are to be found. Yet the words breathe in the Holy Scriptures and are carried by the Holy Ghost. A message from Scripture is clearly formulated (Harris, 1911:105-106).

3.3.2.1.3 To the Son

Prayer hymns to Christ were apparently one of the most remarkable characteristics of the early church. The letter of the governor of Brittany to Ceasar Trajanus is well-known (around 112 AD). In it he amongst other things reports that the Christians gather early on Sunday mornings *carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem* (“and sings a hymn to Christ as God with antiphonal singing). Hasper (1955:66,97), who conducted an intensive study of this quote and its aftereffect with Tertullianus and other early Christian writers, concludes that Plinius’ testimony proves that the early church has the established habit of singing to Christ as God.

Scripturally reliable, free and direct prayer hymns to Christ can be strong weapons against heresy. The Synod of **Antioch** (268) condemned the tendency **not** to want to sing prayer hymns in its verdict against Paul of Samosata.

Ambrosius wrote especially gripping prayer hymns to Christ in the 4th century. In doing so he promoted the orthodox Christology and resisted Arianism. One can refer to his hymn *Veni redemptor gentium*, in which Ambrosius exquisitely praises the entire course of events of Christ’s coming. An expert on Ambrosius, dr Chris Malan, writes in his thesis: “Ambrosius therefore brings us something new, something Christian and new in his hymns. According to the statement of the Apostle Paul: ‘Therefore, if someone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old passed, look, it has all been renewed.’ Indeed, in which surprising manner he brings this to us.” (Malan, 1972:317).

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2.2.2.4 In the Deputaterapport word die liedere van Ambrosius aanbeveel as voorbeelde van vrye liedere, Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue liedere. Histories was hierdie liedere van Ambrosius verdag. Lang (1941:47) stel: “These hymns were songs of praise, devotion and thanksgiving. They reflect the favourite theme of Stoic-Platonic philosophy, which flourished in the time of the early church – namely, the beauty of the cosmos ...”

3.3.2.1.4 To the Holy Spirit

One of the most well-known prayer hymns to the Holy Spirit is the ***Veni Creator Spiritus*** of Rhabanus Maurus (about 850). Cantalamessa (2003: *passim*) indicates in a beautiful study how Scripturally reliable this hymn is. Bingle’s (2000:95) conclusion regarding this hymn can be underwritten with acclamation: “It sets a good example of what the true church hymn should be.”

3.3.2.2 The intercessory prayer hymn

The second form of prayer hymn is the prayer hymn to the Father through/in/with the Son in/through the Holy Spirit. It is necessary to consider all the nuances that are unique to this form for the purposes of this insert. It is sufficient to say that this is a very early form of prayer hymn. In *Ignatius to the Ephesians* (4.2) there is a call for this kind of hymn: Through Jesus Christ you should sing to the Father (“*dia Jesous Christos adetai ...*”). This clearly corresponds with a Scripture such as *Eph 2:18*: “For through Him (Christ) we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” A part such as *Heb 13:15* should also be considered: “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

3.3.3 The proclaiming/instructing/confessing Scripture reliable hymn

This second main type of hymn was often left out of consideration when weighing whether free, Scripture reliable hymns should be allowed into the service. It is too wide a field to go into the motivation for such hymns in the service here. **The point is:** once it is clear that proclamation/instruction/confession take place through **words and song** during the service, then – according to the analogy of prayer and prayer song – it can not legitimately be said that Scripture reliable preaching/instruction/confession can/may only occur in Scripture words, **but** if that same act in the service occurs in song form, **it must only** be *Scripture versified*. The well-known Westminster theologian, John Frame, summarises this well: “The type of argument used to prove exclusive psalmody could equally prove that we must only use prayers and sermons written in Scripture. However even the strongest advocates of exclusive psalmody allow both *extemporaneous preaching* and *free prayer* in worship” (Frame, 1996:124; emphasis added). Also the Westminster New Testamentist, Ver S Poythress, shows persuasively from Scripture and *Ignatius to the Ephesians* that there is an inseparable unity between song and proclamation in the service (Poythress, 1974:224-225).

3.4 *Conclusions*

From the above short historical overview, especially from the early church history, a few conclusions follow with regard to the assignment:

3.4.1 New sources

Sources from the early Liturgical history have been discovered and decoded during the last one-and-a-half to two centuries. These sources were not available to Calvin and his followers when they called on the “old church” for the arrangement of the service. These sources (for instance the *Letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians*) indicate that Scripturally reliable prayer and proclaiming/confessing hymns were used in the **earliest post-apostolic time** in congregations as a tradition.

3.4.2 Selective consideration of sources by advocates of exclusive use of solely Scripturally versified hymns

Calvin did call on certain Church Fathers for his view that the reformation of the Church Hymn should **start with the Psalms**. Old shows persuasively in his thorough investigation of the historical roots of the Reformed liturgy that Calvin only called on two Church Fathers for this view (Augustine and Chrysostomos – last-mentioned without indication). He leaves the beautiful hymns of Ambrosius and others (cf. above) out of consideration.

3.4.3 No call on Scripture for Calvin’s view

It is quite significant that Calvin does not call on Scripture for his view of the Scripture and dogma reliable church hymn. He only calls on the above-mentioned two Church Fathers. Later Reformed groups (for instance Synod of the GKN Vrijgemaakt and different other Reformed groups with whom we have the closest of ties) therefore already changed to singing Scripturally and dogma reliable hymns in the service.

3.5 *Conclusion*

The Church history indicates that Scripture and dogma reliable hymns have been used from the earliest times during services in church communities.

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2.2.2.5 The Deputate moes in hulle beoordeling van die kerklied byvoorbeeld die onderskeid tussen die Westerse and Oosterse kerk in ag geneem het: Vanaf die vroegste tyd van die kerkvaders (2de eeu) is onderskei tussen die lied in die Oosterse kerk and die Westerse kerk (sien W Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, 1951:105). Die Oosterse kerk het die weg opgegaan om die sg. Skrifgetroue and Belydenisgetroue hymn (vrye hymn) naas die Psalms te sing and daarom was die Christelike liedere so geliefd in die Oosterse kerk. Die Westerse kerk het die weg opgegaan om in die kerk die Psalms te sing and die liedere waarvan die teks in die Skrif staan.

2.2.2.6 Die Deputate verreken nie hierdie twee lyne in die kerkgeskiedenis genoegsaam nie. Vanaf die tyd van die Reformasie het hierdie twee lyne voortgegaan sodat daar selfs in die kader van die Reformasie die kerke was wat naas die Psalms, Skrifberymings (Skrifberymde liedere) and Belydenisberymde hymnere ook die Skrif- and belydenisgetroue lied (vrye lied/gesange) gesing het.

2.2.2.7 Die Gereformeerde Kerke in SA, wat stam uit die Calvinistiese Reformasie, het egter nie die weg van die Oosterse kerk opgegaan nie, maar gekies vir die weg van die Westerse kerk (Augustinus) waarin die berymde teks van die Woord asook die teks van die belydenis die inhoud van die lied vorm. Kerkorde, art 69 is die vertolking van hierdie beginselstandpunt van die Calvinistiese Refomasie t.o.v. die kerklied.

2.2.2.8 Wanneer die Gereformeerde Kerke KO, art 69 wysig om ook Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue hymnere te sing, word dus verander aan die beginsel van KO, art 69 and word daar oorgegaan to 'n rigting wat die Gereformeerde Kerke in haar geskiedenis nie gevolg het nie. Dit is naamlik om meer liedere te sing as die beryming van die Skrif and gedeeltes van die Belydenis. KO, art 69 se oorspronklike bedoeling by Dordt was juis om die vrye liedere uit die kerk te weer, omrede die soort hymnere dit so maklik daartoe geleen het om die kerke met dwaalleer te beïnvloed (sien Hooijer, C.1865. Oude Kerkordeningen de Nederlandsche Hervormde Gemeenten p345, 441, 457).

2.2.2.9 CO, art 69 formulates the safe route with regard to the church hymn. History has taught that it is safest to stay with the text of the Word of God. Deviating from this route has lead to much conflict in the history of the church, so that the route of the Calvinist Reformation came to be the safest and the route causing the least resistance in the church.

4. Church political indicators in CO, art 69

4.1 *Argumentation*

- 4.1.1 Ever since its inclusion in the Church Order(s), the article has served the existence, edification, maintenance and fulfilment of churches/believers' mutual faith in the Triune God – especially services (cf. Spoelstra, 371; Jansen, 297). The above-mentioned can be viewed as the principle, the essence, of this article of the Church Order. Seen as such churches' accepted mutual confessions of faith and their mutual selected hymns lie on the same level of truth and service.
- 4.1.2 This does not mean that local churches can not do their own confessions or versify (and sing) their own hymns according to the demand of circumstances, within their own context. The GKSA has always elected for relevant service of the Word and accompanying prayers such as are applicable to the local church. Therefore a hymn aimed at the local demands and circumstances would also meet Biblical guidelines and examples (cf. Petition of Protest, Acta 2003:507-8).
- 4.1.3 Church History also indicates that the truth, on which the church rests, was continually under attack and this endangered the unity. Hymns were sometimes used to promote heresy. Therefore the content of church hymns is not a mediocre issue with which one could interact lightly. For this reason it has been of great value for the order in the church of Christ that churches could (also) select and bind mutual church

hymns and melodies. Local churches (mostly) did not have the necessary gifts to (continually) produce songs of a high quality. Even in the earliest churches it was difficult to find competent poets/theologians for this task (cf. Van der Meiden, 1987:19-181).

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2.2.4 Ander oorwegings

2.2.4.1 Een van die twee versoeke van die twee Beswaarskrifte van Part Sinode Randvaal is dat die keuring and goedkeuring van die kerklied by die plaaslike kerk moet berus en dat Sinode daarna betrek word. Die studie spreek hierdie versoek aan in artikel 4.1.3, p707 van die Rapport. Hiervolgens is die Studiereport van mening dat die keuring van die liedere by Sinode tuishoort and 'n saak is wat al die kerke raak. Volgens die Kommissie is daar op Sinode 2003 nie gevolg gegee aan die versoek om keuring van liednere aan plaaslike kerkrade oor te laat nie.

- 4.1.4 Calvin saw the pure hymn and good music as probably the most enjoyable form of art that God gave man – for His own glorification (Van der Meiden, p30). In his sermon on Ephesians 5:18-21 Calvin says: *Aangezien de mensen van variatie houden: laat ons sien op hoevele manieren God de schatten van zijn goedheid jegens ons ontvouwt. Daarom zijn er zoveel hymneren* (Van der Meiden, 1987:30).
- 4.1.5 The hymns listed in CO, art 69 were also expanded in the GKSA overtime in accordance to the above-mentioned principle/points of departure (pt 2.1.1). There have been further additions to Scripture hymns/versifications and a few Confessional versifications. The question is currently whether a further expansion of the Psalm Book (PSALMBOEK (2003)) by also including Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymns is really necessary? How would the singing/use of Scripture and Confessionally sound hymns in the churches in general and in service specifically serve the churches (now and in future)?
- 4.1.6 The distinction between hymns that *should* be sung and hymns that *is left to the judgement of Church Councils* is an unbearable matter (cf. CO, art 69). The above-mentioned distinction between what *must* and *should* be sung sets certain hymns/Scripture texts above others (cf. pt 2.1, bl503, and pt 2.2.2.1, p506, Petition of Protest, Acta 2003). The 150 Psalms, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the praise songs of Mary, Simeon and Zachariah and the Apostolicum are among the *must*-hymns, while all the other Scripture and dogma/identical/versifications are amongst the *may*-hymns.
- There is no Biblical, confessional, Liturgical or hymnological foundations for this distinction. All the hymns that the GKSA accepts according to the approved guidelines are suitable for use in churches (and during services). Therefore all these selected hymns should be seen on the same level of truth and quality. As little as certain Scripture texts may be put above others, as little may certain Scripture identical versifications and dogma identical versifications be set above others. On which grounds do the 150 Psalms (and the few other hymns as mentioned above) receive preference above the other hymns mentioned in CO, art 69? Does the formulation of CO, art 69 not relativise the hymns that are left to the *judgement of the church councils*?
- The above-mentioned distinction dates back far in the church history – definitely from the Reformation and possibly earlier. The word *must* probably rests on the fact that the Psalms were always seen and used as the essence of the church's hymns from the temple service, via the synagogal services, the early Christian church and Calvin (and other reformers). Yet the distinction is not sustainable based on tradition and use (cf. BC, art 7), and the article should be formulated differently. A possible formulation is offered among the recommendations (cf. 3.1 of this Report).
- 4.1.7 It also a very old tradition (from the early church, via the Reformation) to give local churches liturgical hymn diversity within the same truth/confession. Unity in form and

use is not enforceable (Spoelstra, 1989:371). Throughout church history churches never compelled each other to sing the same hymns in practice, but rather to maintain the same (complete) canon. Therefore the principles, guidelines and choices of church hymns should be clarified by majority assemblies, while the practical use is left to the freedom of the local churches – just like the practical use and ministry of Scripture is entrusted to the local church.

- 4.1.8 The introductory words *In the churches...* has been understood in church law as **in the services** ... There has consistently been a distinction between service allowed hymns and other church hymns (for instance Sk 20-1 and 20-2 *Hymns for use in the home, Psalmboek 2003*). In principle all hymns that are approved *for churches* and that are sung in churches, should follow the set guidelines for our church songs. Therefore the unbearable distinction between hymns for services and other hymns that are sung in churches should be revoked. A hymn is either Biblically, dogmatically and hymnologically on standard or not. Prof AC Barnard rightfully calls the above-mentioned distinction *an unfortunate distinction* and offers seven arguments against it (p31; cf. JHH du Toit, p31; also 21-30).
- 4.1.9 The number and variety of *church* hymns that have been used liturgically in services throughout the centuries in accordance with the above-mentioned principle (pt 2.1.1) are unknown (cf. Van der Meiden, 18-36). Psalm versifications and other hymns literally came and went; only a few stood the test of time. From this it becomes clear that the church governance principle (cf. pt 2.1.1) does not aim to bring stagnation into the hymn treasure of the church, but aims to serve church song according to the demand of day and age – to God's glory and towards the coming of His kingdom.

4.2 *Conclusions*

- 4.2.1 CO, art 69 states the use of the mutual church hymn in church denomination for the sake of order in the church of Christ. This special service, delivered by the National Synods, does not exclude the singing of selected hymns by the local Church Council, just like the Formularies for Baptism and the Holy Communion do not exclude preaching and prayer during the ministry of these sacraments.
- 4.2.2 In church governance the local churches and majority assemblies in the GKSA acknowledged and applied the use and fruit of mutual hymn selection through the years. Great blessing has been received this way.
- 4.2.3 From the hymnological history it is clear that churches were still searching for sensible expansion of the church hymn, once again in accordance with the above-mentioned principle (cf. 2.1.1). The purpose of this was to express the full truth/revelation received from God in song, to pray for it, proclaim it, confess it, and to offer comfort and encouragement. In so doing the spiritual needs of the time and context were (also) served and the God Triune was glorified in all of this.
- 4.2.4 The distinction between hymns that *must* be sung (cf. CO, art 69) and hymns that *may* be sung (*left to the freedom of the local church councils*) should be corrected. All selected hymns in principle lie on the same level of Scriptural truth and hymnological quality. The afore-mentioned implies that there is no first and second rate church hymn, nor a hymn that is more or less true.
- 4.2.5 The distinction between selected hymns for the service and hymns for general church use (in the Psalm Book) should be revoked, since all selected hymns have to meet the required standards and guidelines.

4.3 *Are additions to the Psalm Book necessary?*

4.3.1 Considerations

Consecutive Synods decided that in order to expand the Psalm Book, poets/theologians/hymnologists should be encouraged to present better/additional Scripturally and Confessionally **authentic** as well as Scripturally and Confessionally **versified** hymns to the relevant Deputies for evaluation in accordance with the point of departure of CO, art 69 (cf. 2.1.1 above).

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2.2.4.2 Sinode het reeds in 2003 Belydenis-berymde and Belydenis-identieke liedere goedgekeur. Die Kommissielede is van oordeel dat meer aandag gegee moet word aan hierdie lied en and dat voorbeelde eers hiervan gegee sal word aan Synod om dit te beoordeel alvorens oorgegaan word to oorweging van die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied. Die motivering hiervoor is dat die opdrag om die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied in studie te neem gekom het na aanleiding van die goedkeuring van die Belydenis-identieke en Belydenis-berymde lied op Sinode 2003.

The question is now if there is a further need for Scripturally and Confessionally reliable hymns as a further addition to the two hymn types mentioned? This question can be answered positively based on the following arguments:

- 4.3.1.1 The earliest churches sang all three these types of hymns alongside each other as time and circumstances required (cf. pt 2, 3; Strydom, p68-75; Loots, p31-32). Some of these stood the test of time and are still used in churches today, amongst others in the Reformed tradition. These treasured hymns are appreciated as gifts from God to his church through his Spirit and Word (cf. Stoop in Loader p29-45; cf. also pt 3).
- 4.3.1.2 In the GKSA there is currently a need for additional hymns, especially with regard to the following:
 - (a) Celebration of Easter, Ascension and Christmas: We do not have enough hymns for these festive times when it stretches a few weeks/Sundays. Of course more Scripturally identical or versified hymns can be created, yet the Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymn would also be of great use here (especially because it can combine the Old (promise) and New Testaments (fulfilment), cf. 3.1.6).
 - (b) The different hymns in the PSALMBOEK are too few in number to cover the total Biblical proclamation (Ministry of the Word) adequately.
 - (c) The celebrations of the mentioned festive times in the church calendar are inadequately compiled when church councils have to have selected hymns (for instance from *Die Liedboek van die Kerk*) sung before/after the service, since they do not have synodal approval. Selected hymns (outside of the PSALMBOEK (2003), are widely used in the denomination during these festive times. The benefits and fruits of mutual selection are thwarted in this manner.
 - (d) The congregation does not understand why some hymns have to be sung outside the service and some can be sung during the service during the same festive period. Obviously they notice that the non-Psalms Book hymns are viewed with *scepticism/suspicion/reserve*. This does not glorify God. The service also pays in integrity.
- 4.3.2 There is an identifiable shortage in encouraging, hope directed, eschatological hymns (cf. Loots, p26-29). The *maranata*-call should sound much clearer in the church. All three types of hymns can be used for this purpose.
- 4.3.3 There are good hymns for Baptism and the Holy Communion, but also in this regard an expansion through applicable hymns could be of great use.
- 4.3.4 The GKSA has few hymns that are useful for marriage ceremonies, which sometimes take place during services, but always *in churches* (cf. CO, art 69).
- 4.3.5 The special benefit of a Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymn in comparison to the other two categories is that it can bring the two Biblical testaments together in one hymn. Promise and fulfilment are added together in order to see God's actions through the centuries and to praise it (cf. Barnard *in Du Toit*:21-29; Strydom, p27-29).
- 4.3.6 The Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymn holds great benefit within the category of the (new) *prophetic hymn* (proclamation and application of Scripture, that is actualisation; cf. pt 2). It was used this way throughout the centuries. The church

hymn should also be aimed at the present, dynamic, telling, proclaiming, confessing, praying, encouraging, begging, reconciliatory and reaching out to each other and the world. The new and contemporary hymn serves as instrument for the church to fulfil its calling to testify in a lost, contemporary world (cf. Petition of Protest, pt 3.1-3.2.5.6, Acta 2003:506-510).

4.3.7 New contemporary hymns also serve to prevent the great dangers of formalism and stagnation. At the same time the old and good are newly appreciated and used within this vision.

4.4 *Conclusions*

4.4.1 It is a given, as church history shows, that the mutual hymn treasure of the church contains old as well as new hymns. Last mentioned originate according to time and circumstance.

4.4.2 Although the Scripture and dogma reliable hymn was only sung in the early Christian church, little development took place in this hymn type within the Reformed tradition since the Reformation.

4.4.3 The Scripture and dogma reliable hymn especially has the special benefit that it can combine the Old and New Testamental revelation (promise and fulfilment) in one hymn.

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2.2.2.10 By 4.4.3 wat melding maak dat ons in die Skrifgetroue lied moet sing van die vervulling van die OT in die NT, wys die Kommissie daarop dat van die Skrifberyminge and Belydenisberyminge ook van God se beloftes sing.

4.4.4 This hymn can fight contextual heresy as proclamation and it can confirm and proclaim the true faith.

4.4.5 Churches experience an essential shortage of hymns for the celebration and expression of the church year, hope and expectation, ministry of sacraments, marriages and funerals.

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2.2.2.11 By 4.4.5 word die kerklike jaar as rede aangevoer waarom Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue liedere ingevoer behoort te word. By die Gereformeerdes het die kwessie van die kerklike jaar (anders as in ander tradisies) nooit 'n baie belangrike rol gespeel nie, omdat dit nie 'n instelling van God is nie, maar van die kerk (kyk H Bouwman, Gereformeerde Kerkrecht, deel 2, 1975:484).

4.4.6 In the light of the above-mentioned the Scripture and dogma hymn has become a *neccesitas* for the church of Christ alongside other hymns.

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2.2.2.12 Die uitdrukking in 4.4.6 dat dit 'n *neccesitas* is dat Skrif- and belydenisgetroue liedere gesing behoort te word, is na die mening van die Kommissie te sterk gestel. H Bouwman deel 2 (1975:511) haal Synod van Arnhem in 1930 aan waar hulle in hulle studie aangetoon het dat "goeie skrifmatige gesange" nie 'n *neccesitas* vir die kerk is nie.

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2.3 Bevindings

2.3.1 The Deputies toon nie aan dat daar Skrifgronde bestaan vir die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied/vrye lied nie.

2.3.2 The Deputies het belangrike kerkhistoriese gegewens oor die kerklid nie verreken nie.

2.3.3 The Deputies het nie aangetoon hoe die beginsel van KO, art 69 wesenlik verander sal word as die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied ingevoer word nie.

2.3.4 The Deputies gebruik historiese gegewens oor die vrye lied ter ondersteuning van die Skrif- and Belydenisgetroue lied and dit veroorsaak verwarring.

2.3.5 Daar is geen aanduiding dat vorige decisione van Sinodes oor KO, art 69 verdiskonteer is nie.

5. Principles and criteria for Scripture and Confessionally identical, Scripture and Confessionally versified and Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymns that are sung in the churches

The principles and guidelines for *Skrifberyminge*, as approved and confirmed by the National Synod of 1994 (p538-9), are recommended in the following edited form for all three hymn types.

5.1 Principles and guidelines as adjusted:

5.1.1 The hymns should relay the sense and content of parts of Scripture or Confession purely and correctly in accordance with the church confession.

5.1.2 The hymn should in all regards be subservient to the principle that the service is a threefold meeting in which the people meet their God, God his people, and the people each other in the Lord. As such it should answer to the general character of a true service such as communality, festivity, genuineness, beauty, respect, and humility.

5.1.3 During the selection of a hymn its nature should fit into the different categories of the liturgy through which the congregation comes to God and to each other such as rejoicing, praise, thanks, confession, calling on God, praying, worship, etc.

5.1.4 One should consider the indicated shortcomings and needs of the church liturgy. Not only quantity of hymns, but also the quality and liturgical functionality are paramount.

5.1.5 In addition to 5.1.1 above, the hymn should meet liturgical requirements:

5.1.5.1 The hymn should functionally establish a meeting or communication of the congregation with God and each other within that cadre of believing community.

5.1.5.2 The hymn that carries a prayer character, lends itself to use in a meeting with God and therefore also to the liturgy of the service.

5.1.5.3 A hymn that “answers” to God’s revelation in the Word, nature or history, and glorifies God, sings his praises and proclaims his deeds, can be used in praise and thanks liturgy if its essence is theocentric and it links to the meeting of the congregation with God.

5.1.5.4 A hymn must be vertically directed and serve the respect fitting a meeting with God.

5.1.5.5 The inequality of the parties (the eternal, holy God and the weak, sinful man) who meet in the service should be reflected in the hymn.

5.1.5.6 The hymn should use simple, genuine, clear and understandable language that suits the presence of God (*coram Deo*) expresses genuine and attainable communion with and/or longing for the God of the covenant.

5.1.6 Prayer hymns should meet the following criteria and principles (cf. HC, Su 45):

5.1.6.1 The hymn should be directed at God who has revealed himself in the Word.

5.1.6.2 The words of the hymn should call on God in sincerity.

5.1.6.3 The words of the hymn should address God with regard to the things that He prescribed and in which He wants to be called, served and thanked by believers.

- 5.1.6.4 The language and essence of the hymn contain the basic certainty of the congregation of God's love, loyalty and grace to which He committed, and should express the believer's smallness, need and misery before God.
- 5.1.6.5 The hymn should express gratitude for the redemption in Jesus Christ and the new life in the Holy Spirit (cf. HC, Su 33 and 38) as basis of the meeting with God.
- 5.1.7 Dogmatic hymns should rest on the revelation of God and our confession as a Scriptural truth (dogma).
- 5.1.8 The above principles and criteria also affect the choice of melody. It should be worthy of the meeting with God, should serve the content of the hymn, and the entire congregation, children and adults, should be able to sing it with ease (cf. Acta 1955:65, art 163,2(a), 1,2,3 and 4).

6. Recommendations

The Deputies recommend:

- 6.1 That CO, art 69 is reformulated to read as follows: *In the churches we sing Scripture and Confessionally identical, Scripture and Confessionally versified, and Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymns.*
- 6.2 That the principles and guidelines as approved and confirmed by National Synod 1994 (p538-9) are approved as amended (cf. pt 5) for all three types of hymns;
- 6.3 That this decision be communicated to churches with whom we have unity.

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2.3.2 SAKE WAT GOEDGEKEUR MOET WORD

2.3.2.1 Dat Sinode nie die aanbevelings van die studie, nl. om die Skrif- and belydenisgetroue liedere in die eredienste in te voer, aanvaar nie and KO, art 69 gevolglik nie gewysig word nie.

2.3.2.2 Dat the Deputate Liturgie [opdrag] ontvang om voorbeelde van Belydenisberymde and Belydenisidentieke liedere aan Synod 2009 voor te lê.

*****DEPUTIES AND COMMISSION REPORT OF SYNOD 2006 ENDS HERE*****

1.4 Findings

1.4.1 Two views

- 1.4.1.1 Although a Minority Commission Report also served during Synod 2006, it was not formally considered for this Report before Synod 2009, because it supports the Deputies Report of 2006. The Deputies find from the relevant documents that there are two views on this matter, as represented by the Deputies Report of 2006 and the Majority Commission Report of 2006 (both of which are set out above). In other words, a view that suggests that CO, art 69 should be amended to make room for Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymns in the service, and a view that asks for the retainment of the existing principle as contained in CO, art 69.
- 1.4.1.2 These views are clearly formulated by the recommendations of both the Deputies Report of 2006 and the Commission Report of 2006:

DEPUTIES REPORT 2006

That CO, art 69 is reformulated to read as follows: In the churches we sing Scripture and Confession identical, Scripture and Confession versified and Scripture and Confession reliable hymns.

COMMISSION REPORT 2006

That Synod does not accept the recommendations of the study, i.e. to import Scripture and Confessionally reliable hymns into the serviced, and that CO, art 69 is consequently not amended.

1.4.1.3 The Deputies find that the Commission Report of 2006 indeed did show certain gaps in the Deputies Report of 2006 (cf. 1.2.2 of the Commission Report 2006) that necessitate further remarks.

1.4.2 Statement of principle

The statement of principle on the hymn in the church means that (a) the definition of the confession regarding the meaning of the 2nd commandment and (b) of the content of our prayer service that is pleasing to God, is essential and comes down to us serving God according to his Word and not according to our own thinking.

1.4.3 Historical background

One of the holes that affect the essence of the matter is the lack of a well-considered presentation of the historical background of CO, art 69. The Commission Report of 2006 rightfully indicated this gap (see Totius, First Edition 1977. Versamelde Werke. Vol 3, p347-389):

1.4.3.1 **Calvinist versus Lutheran:** The statement of principle (1.4.3) states a special requirement for the question of where material comes from for the church hymn. The two applications of the principle is applied to the Reformation with on the one hand the so-called Lutheran approach that is in favour of the Scripture reliable hymn, and the Calvinist approach that elects in favour of text reliable Scripture Hymns.

1.4.3.2 **Synod of Dordt:** The formulation of CO, art 69 dates back to the Synod of Dordt while the basic order arrangement goes back to the history of the Reformation via Middelburg, Emden, and Wesel to the Psalm Book of Geneva. Voetius took part in the formulation at Dordt while he himself, as well as later church polity scholars (including Bouwman) wrote commentaries on this. The important point from these works is that the formulation of CO, art 69 does not describe the principle of church song as such, but the specific application, especially as a result of the fierce church struggle during those times. Since many heretics (with special reference to the Remonstrants) used the principle that the church hymn should be Scripturally reliable as an opportunity to import their heresies, the order arrangement to sing only hymns containing words straight from Scripture was repeatedly chosen and confirmed at Dordt 1618-19. While this simple rule was still contained in the Acta of the National Synod of Dordt 1578 (refer to Biesterveld and Kuyper, 1905:118), an emphatic addition was brought into the Church Order of 1618-19 at art 69: “Alle anderen gesanghen salmen uyt de Kercken weren, ende daerder eenighe albereets inghevoert zijn, salmen de selve, met de ghevoegelijckste middelen afstellen” (quoted from Biesterveld and Kuyper, Kerkelijk Handboekje, 1905, p245).

1.4.3.3 **Arguments of JD du Toit:** JD du Toit provided a version of the historical run of events concerning church song in several editions of *Die Kerkblad* 1931, in which he mainly provided a summary with comments on the Report that Deputies handed in on church song at the Synod of the GKN, Arnhem (1930) (see his collected works part 3, p357 and onwards)

Arguments for the singing of hymns of which the text comes from the Bible include the following things not addressed by the Deputies Report:

- (a) that the safety of such hymns lies in the fact that the Holy Spirit gave them to His church himself;
- (b) that no other hymn could be on the same level as a hymn of which the text was inspired by the Holy Spirit himself;
- (c) that such hymns, when versified in accordance with the text, are the best hymns that the church could sing to God;
- (d) that Scripture hymns, of which the Psalms comprise the greatest part, cover all situations and experiences that believers could have and that no additional hymns are necessary;
- (e) that Scripture hymns all essentially contain the full council of God, also for the believers of the New Testament, so that claims that they have shortcomings that have to be filled by other hymns, are not valid. Scripture hymns always have the benefit that they originated within the context of the whole Scripture,

and should be understood and used as such. There is the danger with all other free spiritual hymns that they may cover God's rule one-sidedly and not fall in the (grammatical-historical) context of the Bible itself to be so understood.

1.4.3.4 **Dutch Church history:** In the run of the Dutch Church history (regardless CO, art 69) there were repeated deviations from the rule within Reformed churches (refer to the time of the Severance 1834 and of the Doleance 1886) with the accompanying deformation of the religion. During the reformation processes that followed, churches repeatedly returned to CO, art 69. In Kuyper's argument – even though history is not the norm for the church – it is necessary and wise to learn from history.

1.4.3.5 **History in GKSA:** The position of the GKSA for all times can be indicated with a reference to the historical reconstitution of the Gereformeerde Kerke. The central place of the struggle regarding the hymn in the origin of the GKSA can not be neglected. Consequently several Synod decisions should also be visited up to the most recent where principle guidelines were provided for Scripture versifications and Psalm versifications.

It is important to note that the view and application of CO, art 69 has always been accepted as Scripture and Confession true in the GKSA. Although it has often been questioned, the contrary has never been proven. The Petitions of Protest that served as the bases of the previous Study Deputies at Synod were rejected. The Commission Report that adjudicates the work of the Study Deputies (and which could not be presented in 2006 due to time constraints) rightfully indicated gaps in the Study Report and reasons why the recommendations could not be accepted.

1.4.4 Criteria

The Deputies Report of 2006 lacks a properly worked out Scriptural standard (measure/definition) against which church hymns can be evaluated.

1.4.4.1 The Deputies feel that even the existing principles and criteria for hymns (although purely and soberly formulated) do not offer adequate definition for the selection of potential new hymns to be sung in churches. The two clear requirements are that the versifications should be true to the Bible text and the Confessions (Acta 1994:538). Yet this leaves room for subjectivity, since these criteria can be understood in a manner of ways. Aspects that need attention include:

1.4.4.1.1 Consideration of the exegetical and hermeneutical rules

1.4.4.1.2 Consideration of the complete revelational history

1.4.4.1.3 Consideration of the principles of the Reformed service

1.4.4.1.4 Requirements for suitable language and melody for the church hymn

1.4.4.1.5 Consideration of the deviations that lead to deformation of the religion in history and which should be avoided.

1.4.4.2 As long as this gap exists, it is better to keep CO, art 69 as it is.

1.4.4.3 Until a comprehensive principle design is born in practice that is valid for all hymns (existing and new), it is unthinkable to change the careful order arrangement of CO, art 69 to allow hymns that can not be properly measured and tested.

Decision: Noted 1.4.1.1 to 1.4.4.3.

2. Matters for decision

2.1 *Recommendations*

In the light of the findings Deputies recommend:

2.1.1 That CO, art 69 is not amended;

2.1.2 That Synod considers appointing Deputies in the light of 1.4.4.2 and 1.4.4.3 to formulate a more comprehensive principle design according to which existing and new hymns can be measure and tested.

Decision: See Report of ad hoc commission.

G. REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMISSION

Synod approves the following recommendation:

1. CO, art 69's formulation emphasises the importance of Scripture reliability with regard to hymns sung in the service.
2. CO, art 69 can be amended just like any other in accordance with CO, art 86.
3. Synod is aware of and acknowledges the fact that there are currently different practices in the churches with regard to what is sung. Synod is also aware of the need to maintain and promote unity in spite of differences, and therefore appoints Deputies with the following assignment:
 - 3.1 To, with consideration of previous Synod decisions (GKSA Potchefstroom and Midlands), the Deputies Report and the Commission Report of 2009, formulate a comprehensive principle design according to which existing and new hymns can be tested.
 - 3.2 To present a possible formulation of amendment of CO, art 69 for consideration by Synod.
4. This Deputy Group should be representative of all churches.
5. Synod encourages churches where other practices are followed (see 3 above), to present Psalms, Scripture hymns and other spiritual hymns to the Deputies for adjudication by the next Synod.

Decision: Approved. The name of the Deputies will be the Deputies for Liturgical Matters.