

## **22.8 POINT OF DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL SYNOD BOSVELD ABOUT PRACTISE OF SINGING ZION HYMNS DURING WORSHIP SERVICES (Artt 52, 319)**

- A. Rev JH Grobler states the Point of Discussion.
- B. **Decision:** The Point of Discussion is referred to Commission Liturgical Matters 2.
- C. Rev LJ Buys reports on behalf of Commission Liturgical Matters 2.

### **D. POINT OF DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Point for discussion**

That the practice of singing Zion hymns during the reformed worship service in conjunction with existing synod decisions and church law ruling art 69 church order, must be clarified.

#### **2. Motivation**

- 2.1 The decision by National Synod 2006 for structural unity was an unconditional one in favour of unification of all the churches in the reformed tradition in South Africa, of which the full consequences have not been discussed at the Synod 2006, (Acta 2006:387 ff). As a consequence of the unconditional nature of the decision, churches did not deliberate and decide how to apply church order article 69.
- 2.2 The unity of Church denomination must also find expression in the hymns which we sing during the church service (refer to points of departure with regard to unity, Acta 2006:387, art 2.3.1).
- 2.3 It is widely known that the churches of the National Synod Potchefstroom sing Psalms and Scriptural hymns in accordance with article 69 of the church order. Certain requirements for confessional scripture hymns have also been met so far at Synod 2006. It is also widely known that reformed churches from other synods (eg the ex Classis Capricorn) sing other hymns than those regulated by article 69 of the church order.
- 2.4 National synod has set requirements with which a hymn must comply before it may be sung during the church service (eg Acta 2006:557, art D 2). Church unity within one synod accordingly requires that hymns which are sung during the church service should also be judged according to certain prerequisites.
- 2.5 This aspect of church law should be deliberated at the appointed major assemblies as it is an issue of crucial concern to us in terms of the geographical unity of churches in one denomination after 2006.

#### **3. Request**

General Synod 2009 is requested to provide guidance and a forum for discussion with churches who sing Zion Hymns.

### **E. POINT OF DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Argumentation**

##### **1.1 Cause**

- 1.1.1 It is not (as indicated by motivation 4.1 of the point of description) the decision regarding the regrouping of classes of 2006 (Acta 2006:38ff) that caused the problem situation regarding the singing of the Zion and Lutheran hymns. Long before the regrouping of classes (Art 48 CO) churches from different cultures and languages was already one denomination accepting the same confession and church order. The churches gave one another space for the variety of church singing practices, although it was technical in conflict with Art 69 CO.

- 1.1.2 After the regrouping of classes, the churches with different cultures in practice grew closer to each other and the different singing practices started to have greater influence on one another.
- 1.1.3 The tension/challenge/difference didn't emanate in 2006 but became more visible in 2006.
- 1.2 The differences in singing practice are practical and emanate from different historical and cultural backgrounds, and are not of a principle nature.
- 1.3 The principle unity that exists must practically be made more visible.
  - 1.3.1 The instrument that we have to further this unity in a more practical way is art 69 CO.
  - 1.3.2 The mutual agreement in art 69 CO (serving norm) to realise unity and truth in church singing practice, is currently rather contributing to the tension with regard to church singing practices. The article states that the singing of Psalms and Scriptural hymns is the only way to fulfil the principles of truth and unity in church singing within the GKSA.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the point of discussion is given effect to, and in the light of the argumentation of point 3, in the following manner:
  - 2.1.1 That deputies are named with the mandate to identify the unique situation and challenges of each of the representative churches regarding church singing in the liturgy and to apply art 69.
  - 2.1.2 These to be named deputies must be representative of all the church cultures, preferable experts regarding church singing as well as persons fluent in the languages of the specific churches.

**Decision: Approved. The Point of Discussion succeeds.**