

## **22.9 POINT OF DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL SYNOD FREE STATE AND KWAZULU-NATAL REGARDING SONGS OF SION AND CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 69 (Artt 53, 320)**

- A. Rev PK Lourens 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 of discussion**

The second Regional Synod Free State and KwaZulu-Natal (November 2008) requests the first General Synod (January 2009), in light of the new compilation of major assemblies, to table the issue of CO art 69 and the singing of the Songs of Sion with a view of guiding the churches regarding the orthodoxy of songs and the practice of allowing only songs that can be typified as “rhymed versions of Scripture”. This issue was never concluded in accordance with CO art 46.

#### **2. Motivation**

- 2.1 The Songs of Sion is a bundle of 449 hymns. In many hymns you find a clear relation with words of Scripture. However, not every hymn is a rhymed version of a specific passage of Scripture.
- 2.2 The Songs of Sion weren't approved at any church assembly to be used in worship services.
- 2.3 Article 69 of the Church Order is clear: In the Churches only the 150 Psalms and the rhymed versions of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostolic Confession, and the Hymns of praise of Mary, Zacharias and Simeon shall be sung. The use of other rhymed versions of Bible verses which have been approved by the synod, is left to the jurisdiction of each church council.  
It is clear that Article 69 of the Church Order is in jeopardy. All the songs can not pass the test of a rhymed version of Scripture.
- 2.4 The Songs of Sion was published in many African languages but not in English or Afrikaans. It is therefore difficult to discuss the hymns critically if you are not able to understand the languages involved.
- 2.5 Article 69 of the Church Order involves more churches than those in the Regional Synod and should therefore be handled by the General Synod.
- 2.6 It is the churches that use these hymns that should be especially involved in the study and adjudication of these hymns.

### **E. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION**

#### **1. Evaluation**

- 1.1 The difference in singing practice is practical by nature and flows from the different historical and cultural backgrounds, and is not of a principle nature.
- 1.2 The principle unity that exists must practically be made more visible.
  - 1.2.1 The instrument we have to further this unity in a more practical way is art 69 CO.
  - 1.2.2 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.
- 2.1.3 That the discussions and reflection include the content, application and possible amendment of art 69.

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