

23. Media / Publications

23.1 REPORT DEPUTIES CHURCH MAGAZINES (Artt 110, 115, 206, 207)

- A. Dr AJ Krüger delivers Section D of the Report – *Kruispad/Bondsjeug*.
- B. Rev JG Noëth delivers the Report.
- C. **Decision:** The Report is referred to the Commission for Publications and Media.
- D. Rev AP Kruger reports on behalf of the Commission for Publications and Media.
- E. On behalf of Synod, Dr MJ du Plessis thanked Drr M van Loggerenberg, CN van der Merwe, srs M van Helden, A Breed, J Fourie, br PJ Grobler, dr AJ Krüger and prof JH van Wyk.

F. REPORT

1. Commission

- 1.1 The Editor of *Die Kerkblad* undertakes an in-depth investigation into the structure of the continuation and course of all the church magazines. This is done in co-operation with Deputies Publications, editorial panels of other Church Magazines and in consultation with Management Administrative Bureau. For the purpose of this investigation informed members of church from among the ranks of the communication-related industries/professions must be included.
- 1.2 *Die Bondsjeug*: Dr AJ Krüger is appointed as Editor of *Die Bondsjeug* (later re-named as *Kruispad*).
- 1.3 *Die Kerkblad* must keep the GKSA's 150th year of existence in mind as well as the 500th anniversary of Calvyn's year of birth in 2009.]

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.3 noted.

2. Matters Synod takes cognisance of

- 2.1 Church Magazines have been issued on a regular basis since previous Synod 2006 and a high standard has been maintained. Appreciation for the magazines has been received from various sources. It is, however, observed that subscriber numbers still tend to reveal a general decline.

	Kerkblad	Vroueblad	Slingervel
June 1998	7 144	6 045	6 075
June 2008	4 703	3 436	2 982

- 2.2 Dr PW Bingle was appointed news editor of *Die Kerkblad* in 2006.
- 2.3 Dr AJ Krüger, appointed as editor of *Bondsjeug*, worked hand-in-hand with Rev Paul Grobler and managed to publish a new youth magazine, namely **Kruispad** [*cross roads/road of the Cross*]. This magazine is currently published every two months. Further development of this magazine proves to be very prosperous. The Deputies express their appreciation for developments related to **Kruispad**.
- 2.4 *Kruispad* and Deputies Youth Care work very closely together (raising of funds, sharing staff and office) and they do so to reach out to the very same target group, *i.e.* youth. In the light of these facts it would certainly serve a good purpose if *Kruispad* could in future rather be incorporated with Deputies Youth Care.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.4 noted.

- 2.5 Prof Amie van Wyk has completed the report according to commission Synod 2006, with regard to an in-depth investigation into the structure of the continuation and course of all the church magazines.

1. Assignment

"The newly appointed editor [of 'Die Kerkblad'] conducts, in cooperation with the Deputies Publications as well as the editorial boards of other church magazines, in consultation with the management of the Admin Bureau, an in-depth investigation into the format of the continuation of all our church magazines. Expert members from the communications industry should be approached for this investigation" (Acta GKSA 2006:751).

2. Execution of this assignment

2.1 Appointment of an commission of inquiry

During a meeting of the Deputies Church Magazines in May 2006, confirmed in March 2007, a commission of inquiry is appointed comprising the editor of Die Kerkblad (DK)(c), rev Nico Ligthelm, dr Marina van Loggerenberg and br Giel Erasmus to launch an in-depth investigation into the content and format of all the magazines (see Minutes 19-03-2007, 4.2)

2.2 Questionnaire

The convenor compiled a questionnaire in consultation with the commission, and it was sent to a number of experts for comment. They all reacted in writing, except one.

The following persons were approached:

Prof Danie du Plessis (prof in communications Unisa) (oral information)

Prof Calvyn Snyman (retired prof in communications NWU)

Prof Johannes Froneman (prof in communications NWU)

Prof Jacques van der Elst (currently Head Executive Officer of the SA Academy for Science and Art, and previously prof in Afrikaans-Nederlands NWU)

Ds Chris Coetsee (emeritus minister, currently from Stompneusbaai)

Mnr Sarel Venter (retired vice-editor Die Volksblad)

Mnr Herman Torien (independent journalist and political researcher, Bloemfontein)

A few "ordinary" members

2.3 Consultation with the editorial board of other church magazines

There was consultation with the other church magazines with regard to a possible amalgamation of the magazines into one family magazine.

2.4 Financial aspects

Br Giel Erasmus has been requested to investigate the financial aspects (including amalgamation) of all the magazines and to report on it.

3. Answers to the questionnaires

Below follows a short version of the answers to the questionnaires. The questions focused on *Die Kerkblad* as oldest church magazine especially, but also touches on the other magazines to a greater or lesser extent. The remarks of the respondents are directly quoted.

3.1 How do you evaluate "Die Kerkblad" as church magazine in general?

"My oordeel oor DK in sy huidige formaat is positief. Dit is opbouend en informatief en 'lerend' wat lidmate betref. Wat my betref, gaan DK van krag tot krag." (*My opinion of DK in its current format is positive. It is edifying and informative and instructing to members. In my opinion it is going from strength to strength*)

"DK beklee 'n besondere plek onder kerklike tydskrifte weens toespitsing op 'pitkos' en prinsipiële besinning en leiding oor kerklike, geloofs- en sake van die dag." (*DK has a special place amongst church magazine due to its focus on substance and fundamental considerations and guidance regarding church, religious and current affairs*)

"Ek meen dat DK as kerklike tydskrif sy plek volstaan in die Afrikaanse kerklike en maatskaplike samelewing. DK se gesaghebbende stem word soms wyer as net in die Gereformeerde Kerke gehoor." (*I feel that DK as church magazine stands firm in the Afrikaans church and social society. DK's authoritative voice is sometimes heard wider than only the Reformed Churches*)

"In die algemeen is DK 'n netjiese, goed versorgde, prinsipiële goed verantwoorde kerklike tydskrif wat Christelike leiding gee en koers aandui, en wat 'n verskeidenheid

algemene kerklike inligting en nuus verskaf.” (*In general DK is a neat, well cared for, responsible church magazine that gives Christian guidance and direction, and which provides a variety of general church information and news*)

“Goeie blad met goeie artikels.” (*A good magazine with good articles*)

“Die inhoud is plek-plek baie interessant, maar ek kry die gevoel die GKSA is net met leerstellige en etiese kwessies besig.” (*The content is very interesting in some places, but I get the feeling that the GKSA is only busy with doctrinal and ethical matters*).

3.2 What do you view as the strong points of DK?

“Sy Gereformeerde grondslag.” (*Its reformed foundation*)

“Die sterk punte hou veral verband met die aktualiteit van temas. Dit is baie belangrik dat die redakteur die aktualiteit van gebeurtenisse van elke dag deur middel van DK bespreek en aanroer.” (*The strengths have to do with the relevance of the themes. It is very important that the editor touches on and discusses the events of every day in the DK*)

“Die gees en rigting in die tradisie van die Reformasie wat in DK weerspieël word in die hoof- en redaksionele artikels, die beligting van sake van verskillende kante in tema-artikels, die Skrifgetroue getuienis oor aktuele sake, die redakteur se gesprekke met lidmate van die GKSA en selfs met lidmate van die susterkerke. Dit is prysenswaardig dat vroue al hoe meer die geleentheid kry om artikels in DK te publiseer en daardeur hul gelykwaardigheid as lidmate en kinders van God te erken.” (*The spirit and direction in the tradition of the Reformation reflected in DK in their main and editorial articles, the discussion of matters from different sides in theme-articles, the Scripture-true testimony regarding current affairs, the editor’s discussions with members of the GKSA and even members of the sister churches. It is also praiseworthy that more and more women receive the opportunity to publish articles in DK, which acknowledges them as equal members and children of God*)

“Vir my is ’n uitstaande kenmerk en ’n sterk punt wat DK se lewenswaardigheid verhoog het, die onderhoude met bekende mense. Die tematiese hantering van sake is ook ’n groot pluspunt en het al baie interessante en leersame bydraes opgelewer.” (*For me one outstanding characteristic and strength that increases the value of DK is the interviews with well-known people. The thematic way of dealing with matters is also a plus point and has provided many interesting and informative contributions*)

“Stewige inhoud. Ek hou veral van die onderhoud met selfs nie-Doppers.” (*Solid content. I especially like the interview with even non-Doppers*)

“Artikels is baie volledig en goed nagevors.” (*Articles are very complete and well-researched*)

3.3 What would you view as the weak point of the DK?

“Nie ’n ernstige swak punt nie. Sommige bydraes is (egter) nie altyd so lesersvriendelik nie. Teoloë wat vir DK skryf, moet onthou dat hulle nie altyd net vir predikante en ander teoloë skryf nie, maar ook vir gewone lidmate. Laat daardie ‘hoë’ leesstof en morele lesse maar omring wees deur ligter of meer gewilde leesstof vir die gewone mense.” (*No serious weak point. However, some contributions are not always reader friendly. Theologians writing for DK, should remember that they do not always write for an audience of ministers and other theologians, but also ordinary members. Let those ‘high’ contributions and moral lessons be surrounded by lighter and more popular reading matter for ordinary people*)

“Sommige bydraes is vir die deursneeleser moontlik te teologies vakkundig, moeilik om te lees en te verstaan. Sommige foto’s is te klein ...” (*Some contributions are too theologically subject dense for the average reader, difficult to read and understand. Some photos are too small...*)

“Slaag nie daarin om uit sy ‘Dopper-image’ te breek nie – daar is ’n groot leserskring daarbuite wat bereik moet word. Baie lidmate kla dat die artikels te ingewikkeld is.” (*It does not succeed in breaking its Dopper-image – there is a large circle of readers out there who should be reached. Many members complain that the articles are too complicated*)

“Somtyds kan die artikels bo die gewone lidmaat se verstaansvermoë wees.”
(*Sometimes the articles are above the heads of the average member*)

“Die kennisname van gebeure in swart gemeentes kan meer aandag kry. Ons swart dominees moet aan die woord kom. DK kan ’n voorbeeld stel deur nog meer kerklik interkultureel te wees. Dis die manier waarop mense van verskillende kulture eensgesind in die geloof mekaar kan leer ken.” (*Notifications of events in black congregations can receive more attention. Our black ministers should let their voices be heard. DK can set an example by being more ecclesiastically intercultural. That is the way in which people of different cultures can get to know each other better in faith*)

“Die gebrek aan nuus.” (*There is a shortage of news*)

3.4 *Does DK succeed in equipping members for their service work in the church and the kingdom of God?*

“As die vraag verstaan moet word of die redaksie **slaag** om toerusting te verskaf: ja, seker. Van die oordenking af tot by die laaste artikel en brief. DK bied toerusting deurlopend van maand tot maand, en die lesers lees selektief, soekende na leiding, na geloofsversterking, na gemoedsvrede, na vertroosting, na sekerheid, en God se sorg.” (*If the question is whether the editorial board succeeds in providing equipment: yes, certainly. From the devotion to the last article and letter. DK offers equipment continuously from month to month, and the readers read selectively, searching for guidance, strengthening of faith, emotional peace, comfort, certainty, and God’s care*)

“Ja, hoewel daarteen gewaak moet word dat interne getwis die aandag trek i.p.v. die kerk se taak en roeping in die koninkryk. ’n Moontlikheid is dat in elke uitgawe aandag aan die evangeliserende taak gegee word d.m.v. ’n rubriek met nuus/gevallestudies, prinsipiële besinning.” (*Yes, although DK should guard against internal conflict receiving attention instead of the church’s task and calling in the kingdom. A possibility is that each new delivery can pay attention to the evangelising task by means of an article with news/case studies and consideration of fundamentals*)

“Oor die kwaliteit van die bydraes is geen twyfel nie – trouens, dit is soms van verbluffende hoë kwaliteit en verdien beslis nie om in ’n beperk-geleesde tydskrif ‘vasgevang’ te word nie; dit is in geheel ’n tydskrif wat met vreug en vertroue aan mense van ander kerkverbande uitgeleen kan word.” (*There is no doubt about the quality of the contributions, in fact, they are sometimes of astounding high quality and do not deserve to be ‘trapped’ in a magazine with limited readership; it is on the whole a magazine that can be lent to people from other denominations with pride and certainty*)

“Ek weet van ’n geval waar ’n teologiese professor van ’n susterskerk in sy klas vertel het van ’n gesin in die GKSA (wat lesers van DK is) wat volgens hom besonder goed ingelig was oor en toegerus vir hulle dienswerk in kerk en koninkryk. Hy het eintlik jaloesers gevoel! Dit beantwoord seker bogenoemde vraag.” (*I know of a case where a theological professor of a sister church told his class about a family in the GKSA, readers of DK, who were according to him especially well informed about and equipped for their service work in the church and the kingdom. He actually felt envious! This must answer the above question*)

3.5 *Does DK offer fair space for open debate about church and theological matters?*

“Ja, ek dink so – die redakteur verskaf ruimte vir debat. Dis origens duidelik dat hy versigtig en selektief te werk gaan en ’n goeie oordeel het oor wat opgeneem behoort te word en wat nie. Ek glo dat hy die maatstaf aanlê van ‘opbouendheid’ en nie afbrekend nie. In terme van opbouendheid sou ’n mens kon hoop dat meer kerkklimate deelneem aan die skriftelike debatte.” (*Yes, I think so – the editor provides space for debate. It is overall clear that he works selectively and carefully and has good judgement of what should be included and what not. I believe that he provides the measure of ‘edification’ and not destruction. In terms of edification one could hope that more church members participated in the written debates*).

“Ja, beslis.” (*Yes, certainly*)

“Beslis.” (*Certainly*)

(None of the respondents reacted negatively to this question.)

3.6 *Is the news coverage of DK wide enough? (This includes news of the GKSA as well as other local and international church communities).*

“As dit daarom gaan dat Gereformeerdes daarteen moet waak om te eng te ken en te dink, kan die nuusdekking gerus wyer wees. ’n Mens behoort kerklik nie te klein van God se kerk en koninkryk te dink nie. God hou sy hele skepping in stand en Hy is wêreldwyd hoof van sy kerk.” *(If this is about the fact that all Reformed persons should guard against knowing and thinking too narrowly, the curiosity could be a bit wider. One should not think too small in terms of God’s church and kingdom. God maintains his entire creation and is Head of his Church world-wide)*

“Daar is wat my betref **nog nie genoeg** nuusdekking in DK nie. Nuus oor die wel en wee van kerke en lidmate bevorder samehorigheid. Verslae van gesprekke met mense wat ’n belangrike rol in kerk en samelewing vervul, is eweneens belangrik. Ek verwelkom die betrokke rubriek. Ook die internasionale nuus op kerklike front kan dalk waar moontlik meer aandag kry.” *(In my opinion there is not enough news coverage in DK yet. News about the weal and woe of churches and members increases coherence. Reports of discussions with people who fulfil an important role in the church and in society are equally important. I welcome this article. Also the international news on church front can receive more attention where possible)*

“Daar is altyd ruimte vir beter nuusdekking. Lesers sal baie graag meer oor medegelowiges se wel en wee, stryd en prestasies, wil lees.” *(There is always room for better news coverage. Readers would like to read more about the weals and woes of fellow believers, their struggles and triumphs)*

“Kan meer inligting gee oor ander kerke [= kerkgemeenskappe] en hulle standpunte.” *(DK could provide more information about other churches [=church communities] and their views)*

“Ja.” (Yes)

“Nee.” (No)

3.7 *Does DK give sufficient testimony on public moral issues and against that which harms the kingdom of God?*

“Ek dink so. Voorbeelde hiervan is daar velerlei veral wat betref die pragtige tema-uitgawes (bv. Augustus 2007).” *(I think so. There are many examples, especially regarding the beautiful theme-editions)*

“Dit ly geen twyfel nie dat DK onder sy huidige redakteur werklik en seker meer as voorheen sy stem laat hoor oor openbare morele kwessies en teen dit wat die koninkryk van God skade berokken.” *(There is no doubt that DK certainly and more than before let its voice be heard regarding public moral issues and against that which harms the kingdom of God under the guidance of the current editor)*

“Ja, maar is dit werklik toeganklik, dus leesbaar genoeg vir ‘gewone’ lidmate?” *(Yes, but is it really accessible, in other words, readable enough for ‘ordinary’ members?)*

(No negative answer was received here.)

3.8 *How do you judge the format of DK? Should it for instance contain more photos or should more attention be paid to lay-out?*

“Wat voorkoms betref, is die tydskrif presies op balans van kleurvol met smaak wees, sonder om na die ‘krismisboom’ te neig.” *(With regard to appearance the magazine is exactly balanced in terms of being colourful and tasteful, without tending towards the ‘christmas tree’)*

“Dit is nie ’n populêre tydskrif nie en ek dink die teikengroep stel meer belang in die inhoud van artikels as in foto’s. Die uitleg is gewoonlik goed genoeg.” *(It is not a popular magazine and I think the target group is more interested in the content of articles than in photos. The lay-out is usually good enough)*

“Die huidige formaat is goed hanteerbaar en behoort so te bly. Die bladuitleg vereis nie veel meer aandag nie.” *(The current format is manageable and should stay the same. The page lay-out does not need much more attention).*

“Meer foto’s is nodig. Die bladuitleg kan ook meer aandag kry. Sommige lang bydraes wat oor ’n hele paar bladsye versprei is, skeep maar ’n vaal indruk.” *(More photos are*

necessary. The page lay-out can also receive more attention. Some long contributions that span quite a few pages create a boring impression)

“Die bladuitleg is saai. Kry ’n bladuitlegredakteur.” (*The page lay-out is boring. Get a page lay-out editor*)

3.9 How does DK compare to other church magazines?

Respondents reacted to this question with hesitation because they are not all frequent readers of other church magazines. Yet the following comments were made:

One respondent referred to the Hervormde Kerk’s family magazine *Konteks* with appreciation as a “pragtige voorbeeld van lewendige bladuitleg en ’n wye verskeidenheid lesenswaardige bydraes” (*beautiful example of lively page lay-out and a wide variety of readable contributions*).

Another respondent referred to the fact that other church magazines have “’n ietwat vryer, oper meningsverwisseling (bestaan); ek weet nie waarom ons so bang is vir ‘openbare’ gesprek oor kerklike sake nie; gesprek in die regte gesindheid gevoer, sonder kwaadwilligheid, kan tog misverstande en meningsverskille uit die weg ruim – soos oor omdigtings, Bybelvertalings, die wyse waarop die nagmaal gevier word, die vrou in die ampte. NB: Ek kies ‘Die Kerkblad.’” (*...a somewhat freer, more open exchange of opinion; I don’t know why we are so scared of ‘public’ debate about church matters; discussion with the right attitude, without ill intent, can clear up misunderstandings and differences in opinion, like for instance about reversifications, Bible translations, the way in which communion is celebrated, women in the special offices. NB: I choose ‘Die Kerkblad’*)

“DK sou ook (soos die ‘Kerkbode’) vinnige opnames kon maak oor sake wat onder lidmate leef.” (*DK could also (like die ‘Kerkbode’) have quick surveys regarding matters that members are involved in*)

3.10 What can be done to increase the current relevance of DK?

“DK is myns insiens meesal bly wat aktualiteit betref.” (*In my view DK is mostly on par regarding relevance*)

“Ek dink nie dat DK se aktualiteit verhoog hoef te word nie. As ’n mens die afgelope reeks van DK nagaan, is dit duidelik dat die aktualiteit van Suid-Afrika toereikend aandag kry – inderdaad genoegsaam.” (*I don’t think that the relevance of DK should be increased. If one looks at the past series of DK, it is clear that the relevance of South Africa receives adequate attention – indeed enough*)

“Oor aktualiteit, vanuit my oogpunt, kan ‘Die Kerkblad’ werklik sy bors ver uitstoot (vgl. die artikels oor die Armeense geskiedenis deur ds Eric Kayayan). In die geheel beskou, is verskeie aktuele onderwerpe aangespreek, waaroor die ander media maar stil was, of baie selektief met inligting omgegaan het ... Dit sluit onderwerpe soos landbou-omstandighede, misdaad, verwickelinge in die buiteland, klimaatsverandering en vele meer in. Redaksionele kommentare is gelykstaande aan die beste wat in ander media te lese is.” (*Regarding relevance, DK can in my opinion be proud. [see for instance the articles on the Armenian history by rev Eric Kayayan]. On the whole, different relevant topics have been addressed about which the media has been quiet or has interacted with very selectively ... This includes matters such as farm circumstances, crime, developments abroad, climate change and much more. Editorial comment is equal to the best to be found in other media*)

“Deur dit ’n weekblad te maak (as dit haalbaar is) ... en ’n uitgebreide bemarkings- en reklameveldtog geloods word.” (*By making it a weekly [if possible] ... and by launching a wide marketing and advertising campaign*)

“Die aktualiteit van die blad kan verhoog word deur die lidmate, lesers, mense, in hulle konkrete lewensituasies op hulle lewenspad in die wêreld met die heersende tydsgees raak te sien en hulle binne dié konteks voor te berei en toe te rus vir hulle take en roepingsvervulling deur die tekens van die tye te onderskei.” (*Relevance can be increased by noticing members, readers, people in their real life situations on the paths of their lives in the world with its current spirit, and by preparing and equipping them within that context for their task and calling by distinguishing the signs of the time*)

- “Ideaal gesproke: stel ’n joernalis aan.” (*Ideally speaking, appoint a journalist*)
- 3.11 *What suggestions would you like to make to the editorial board to increase the functionality of DK?*

Apart from certain matters that already appeared in the answers above, there was further reference to the following:

“Met die kragte en middele tot die redaksie se beskikking kan daar nouliks meer van hulle verwag word. Na my mening behoort daar in die gemeentes met hulle kerkrade kragte aan die gang te kom om lidmate in te trek in ’n lees- en gespreksaksie oor die leef- en taalwêreld met sy dringende eise waarbinne ons geplaas is ...” (*With the means available to the editorial board, one can hardly expect more. In my opinion congregations and church councils should set the wheel rolling to involve members in the reading- and discussion regarding the life and language world with its urgent pressures*)

“My hoofprobleem is egter dat daar so dan en wan ’n uitgawe met ’n hooftema verskyn waar ek self glad nie in die betrokke tema belangstel nie. Die betrokke uitgawe bied dan vir my min leesstof. Dit is nie ernstige kritiek nie – die positiewe oorskadu hierdie heeltemal.” (*My main problem is that every now and again there is an edition with a main theme that I myself am not interested in at all. That particular edition then offers very little. This is not serious criticism – the positive outweighs this completely*)

- 3.12 *What should be done to increase the number of subscribers to DK?*

Remark: “Research confirms that people read less and makes use of electronic media more.” (The number of readers of *Die Kerkblad* decreased from 7800 to 4820 from 1995 to 2008 (38%), the *Vroueblad* from 6300 to 3540 (44%) and the *Slingervel* from 6900 to 3100 (55%).

“Kerkrade kan sorg dat die blad bekendgestel word en lidmate probeer oortuig om in te teken. Daar is kerkrade wat dit doen. In ander gevalle kan kerkrade ook help met die verspreiding deur die blad by ’n gemeente te laat aflewer en aan intekenare beskikbaar te stel ... Nog ’n moontlikheid is om die inhoud van die blad by wyksbyeenkomste in diepte te bespreek en so belangstelling te wek. Dit kan die geleentheid bied om ’n aktuele probleem onder die aandag te bring en die leiding wat in ’n artikel(s) gegee word te bespreek en so mense se belangstelling te wek.” (*Church Councils can see to it that the magazine is introduced and can try to convince members to subscribe. There are church councils who do so. In other cases Church Councils can help with distribution by having the magazine delivered to a congregation and making it available to subscribers ... Another possibility is to discuss the content of the magazine in-depth at ward gatherings and to create interest in such a manner. They can offer the opportunity to bring a relevant problem to the attention of members and the guidance offered by the article can be discussed and interest can be created in this manner*)

“Om toe te gee aan die neiging van lui leesgedrag sou meer illustrasie/fotomateriaal gebruik moet word. Ek is bekommerd oor die jonger geslag – die persone tussen 30-40. Miskien is ek verkeerd in my afleiding dat dié kategorie dalk ontbreek onder DK se lesers. Kom ons teiken die lidmategroep tussen 30 en 40 in kerkverband. Dit kan in kleiner groepe in gemeenteverband geskied. Dit is moontlik dat ’n Kerkblad-gespreksgroep geïnisieer word wat maandeliks na die verskyning van DK vergader. Opskerping/bemaking is nodig. Gemeente-aktiwiteite moet optimaal in DK gepubliseer word.” (*In order to pander to the tendency of lazy reading behaviour more illustrations/photo material would have to be used. I am concerned about the younger generation – those between 30 and 40. Maybe I am wrong that that category are not among DK readers. Let’s target the members between 30 and 40 in the denomination. This can happen in smaller groups in congregations. It is possible to initiate a Kerkblad discussion group that gather each month after DK appears. Reminders/marketing is needed. Congregation activities should be published in DK optimally.*)

“Wat van ’n groter verskeidenheid leesstof? Wat van meer blokkiesraaisels? Wat van die uitruil van artikels en nuus met ander kerklike tydskrifte en selfs die dagbladpers?” (*What about a greater variety of reading material? What about more crossword*)

puzzles? *What about the exchange of articles with other church magazines and even the daily press?*)

“Maak die blad aantrekliker en toegankliker. Oorweeg ’n weeklikse nuusdiens aan gemeentes sodat brokkies uit ‘Die Kerkblad’ in die weeklikse gemeenteblaaie neerslag vind. Dit kan lidmate prikkel om die hele blad te wil lees. Oorweeg ’n webwerf.” *(Make the magazine more attractive and accessible. Consider a weekly news service to congregations so that pieces from DK can find their way to congregation newsletters. This can inspire members to read the whole magazine. Consider a webpage)*

One respondent mentions that he takes his DK’s to the office frequently and lends them to colleagues; “we seldomly get them back; some of the people literally read it from cover to cover, and I have only heard positive comments.”

“Deur beter bemarking.” *(Through better marketing)*

“My voorstel is dat daaraan gedink word om ’n bestaande instansie te nader, bv. instansie wat argumentsonthalt vir Radio Kansel bemarking doen (advertensies verkoop). Om ’n eie bemarker in diens te hê, is duur. Veral as landswyd advertensies gewerf moet word. As *Die Kerkblad* sy eie bemarkingskomponent wil hê, stel ek voor dat geadverteer word vir ’n bemarker in elke groot sentrum, wat dan net vir kommissie werk.” *(My suggestion is that you think of approaching an existing institution, for instance an institution that does marketing for Radio Pulpit (sell advertisements). To have an own marketer is expensive. Especially if ads have to be recruited all over the country. If DK wants to have its own marketing component, I suggest that they advertise for a marketer in each large centre who will then work for commission)*

3.13 *What do you think of one magazine for the entire family?*

“Daar kan ’n saak daarvoor uitgemaak word om die volgende redes: almal in die gesin te beweeg om dit te lees en die blad ’n huisgenoot te maak. Die kinders word daarmee groot en word moontlik by volwassenheid self intekenare. Hierdie opsie sal vereis dat daar vir die spesifieke leesnodighede en belangstellings van kinders voorsiening gemaak sal moet word. Vir die ouers bied dit die voordeel dat hulle op ’n manier kennis kan kry van wat in die kinderwêreld aan die gang is. Dit betref ook die leesstof vir vroue.” *(One can make a case for it for the following reasons: everyone in the house can be moved to read it and one can make a family companion of the magazine. The children will grow up with it and possibly become subscribers as grown-ups. This option will mean that the specific reading needs and interests of children will have to be catered for. For parents it has the advantage that they can in a way take note of what is going on in the world of children. This is also applicable to reading matter for women)*

“Ek het al lankal gedink dat DK en ‘Die Vroueblad’ gerus maar kan saamsmelt in een tydskrif vir die hele gesin. ‘Die Vroueblad’ word ook graag deur mans gelees. ‘Die Vroueblad’ se uitleg is fleurig en netjies en dit kan net so wel in ’n gesinstydskrif oorgeneem word – en groot waarde tot DK toevoeg. Finansiële oorwegings soos minder verspreidingskoste kan dalk die deurslag help gee.” *(I have thought for a long time that DK and ‘Die Vroueblad’ can amalgamate into one magazine for the whole family. ‘Die Vroueblad’ is also read by men. It’s lay-out is tasteful and neat and it could just as well be taken over by a family magazine – and this can add value to DK. Financial considerations such as less distribution cost could perhaps be definitive)*

“Ja, **een** gesinstydskrif is die ideaal, maar dit verg kapitaal – ’n groter vaste redaksie is byvoorbeeld nodig asook ’n bemarker. Dit moet ’n blad wees met geloofspitkos (soos DK nou bevat), maar tegelyk ook meer populêre leesstof. ’n Samevoeging kan enersyds besparing meebring, maar redaksionele koördinasie is noodsaaklik. Ek kan my wel voorstel dat so ’n tydskrif met die regte bemarking byval sal vind.” *(Yes, one family magazine is ideal, but this takes capital – a larger permanent editorial board is needed, as well as a marketer. It should be a magazine with religious food for thought (like DK has now), but should also contain popular reading matter. An amalgamation could on the one hand bring savings, but editorial coordination is crucial. I can imagine that such a magazine might be popular with the correct marketing)*

“Voeg saam, met behoud van afdelings wat vir almal sorg.” (*Join them together with sections that take care of everyone*)

“Ek dink die afsonderlike tydskrifte is beter: elke teikengroep kan sê: ‘Dis ons s’n!’ ipv te verdwaal tussen die blaaie van ’n massiewe ‘Die Kerkblad’.” (*I think separate magazines are better: each target group can say: “It is ours”, instead of getting lost between the pages of a massive ‘Die Kerkblad’*)

“Nie aanvaarbaar, verskillende lesers met verskillende behoeftes en belangstellings.” (*Not acceptable, different readers with different needs and interests*)

“Daar kan nie sonder meer aanvaar word dat ’n enkele gesinstydskrif teenoor die huidige vier, bloot omdat dit saamgevoeg word, die sirkulasiesyfer gaan verbeter nie. Dit sou meer realisties wees om te verwag dat die huidige dalende tendens steeds sal voortgaan.” (*It can not just be assumed that a single family magazine will improve the circulation numbers in comparison to the current four just because it is an amalgamation. It would be more realistic to think that the current decrease in numbers will continue*)

4. Consultation with other Magazines

4.1 Consultation with the Vroueblad

The editorial board of ‘Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad’ were consulted, but no final decision could be reached. On the one hand it was thought that one family magazine could have many advantages, as pointed out by the above respondents, and on the other hand “Die Vroueblad” has a long tradition, it meets a certain need and has a fund of about R339 000.

The following reaction was received from the editorial board of ‘Die Vroueblad’:

“Uit informele navraag en navorsing per telefoon en persoonlike gesprekke, blyk dit dat die meerderheid lesers nog tevrede is en sterk ten gunste van ’n afsonderlike tydskrif voel. Die redaksie het die moontlikheid van ’n enkele gesinstydskrif oorweeg en kan die voor- en nadele daarvan insien. Geen definitiewe besluit is geneem nie, aangesien almal stem dat ’n verandering nie noodwendig ’n verbetering sal wees nie, en ook nie noodwendig in die lig van stygende drukkoste ens. finansiëel haalbaar sal wees nie.” (*From informal inquiry and research by phone and personal conversations, it seems that the majority of readers are still satisfied and strongly in favour of a separate magazine. The editorial board has considered the possibility of a single magazine and can see the advantages and disadvantages. No definitive decision has been made, since everyone agrees that a change would not necessarily be an improvement, and will not necessarily even be financially attainable due to the increasing printing cost*)

4.2 Consultation with the Slingervel

The editorial board of DK consulted the editorial board of ‘Die Slingervel’ (magazine for the junior youth) and it was their opinion that they meet a special need and that they want to continue on their own.

4.3 Consultation with the Bondsjeug/Kruispad

Regarding ‘Bondsjeug’, Synod 2006 (Acta 2006:751) appointed dr Braam Krüger as chief editor who would handle this matter further. A new magazine ‘Kruispad’ (magazine for senior youth) was established in the meantime and their editorial board will report on this matter themselves.

The Deputies have discussed the possibility of uniting Kruispad and Die Slingervel, but could not reach a final conclusion.

5. Financial aspects

Br Giel Erasmus brought our attention to the following matters (from the side of the Administrative Bureau):

- 5.1 The Director of the Administrative Bureau has over the years built a reserve to soften the increased printing and distribution cost. Enough paper was bought for printing the church magazines until June 2010. However, the reserve (R146 000) has now been depleted.

- 5.2 *Die Vroueblad* has a fund of about R339 000.
- 5.3 “Deur die huidige vier tydskrifte in ’n enkele gesinstydskrif saam te voeg, mag tot ’n besparing van kostes (salaris, reiskostes, druk- en verspreidingskoste) lei. Die besparing sal egter nie van so ’n aard wees dat die huidige tekorte sal verdwyn nie. Dit sal die huidige situasie hoogstens vir ’n tydperk effens verlig.” (*Joining the four magazines into one may lead to a cut in costs [salaries, travel cost, printing and distribution cost]. However, the decrease in cost will not be enough that the current shortages will disappear. It will at the most slightly relief the current pressure for a while*)
- 5.4 The decrease in readership places greater pressure on the annual estimate per member.

6. Remarks and conclusions

- 6.1 In any evaluation of the church magazines one should take into account that there are limited editorial offices: those of the DK consist of one full-time lady, Johanna Fourie, a part-time editor, an editorial board who work as volunteers and no marketer. The *Vroueblad* works with a part-time editor, an editorial board who work as volunteers and a graphic designer who do the page lay-out and front page.
- 6.2 It is clear from the responses and other discussions that the readers have special appreciation for the column in DK *Die redakteur gesels met*. (This is a method often used in the public press.)
- 6.3 Some respondents remarked that some of the articles in DK is too theological, too difficult and not always reader friendly. The editorial board has gone to some length to offer articles in a comprehensible form of language. Articles are often referred back to a writer for reformulation, and sometimes the editorial board themselves eased difficult words. In cases of focus articles the task of the editorial board is of course more difficult because time plays an important role – the copy should be handed to the printer at a certain time.
- 6.4 The editorial board of DK did its best to allow and manage open debate about sometimes contentious matters as much as possible. There was an attempt to be fair on all sides. In a few cases where the editorial board could not finish a matter, it was referred to the Deputies Church Magazines for finalisation.
- 6.5 The editorial board of DK has consulted experts with regard to lay-out and has tried throughout to improve with each edition. Photos are used as far as possible, but if writers do not send in photos in time, the hands of the editorial board are tied.
- 6.6 The editorial board of the DK has noticed a greater need for news coverage and has consequently appointed a news editor in the person of dr PW Bingle in order to assure wider news coverage. This has had good results.
- 6.7 With the new development of geographical church assemblies the new editorial board will have to pay more attention to church events in the so-called ‘younger’ churches. They will have to consider to what extent they might also use articles in English without paying in the character of DK.
- 6.8 The editorial board of DK has a great need for a person who pays specific attention to marketing. It can not be expected from a part-time editorial staff to do marketing as well. The new editorial board should consider appointing such a person (who can preferably serve on the editorial board). The target group should especially be people between 30 and 45 years of age (especially young married couples).
(*Note: For each R100 000 that we spend here, the subscription will increase with R25 per edition. That is if there is one magazine with 4000 subscriptions. Currently 11 000 copies are printed, but many magazines go to the same house. R100 000/11000 is R18 if 2 magazines go to the same house. The question is therefore if the subscribers would be able to afford it*)
- 6.9 Regarding subscriber-recruitment and readership, the following remarks can be made:
- 6.9.1 Church Councils should cooperate more regarding the introduction and distribution of DK. Church Councils reacted poorly on attempts of the editorial board.

- 6.9.2 DK should be introduced in congregation newsletters frequently. Johanna Fourie sends weekly notices to congregation about the next edition of DK, and few make it into newsletters. Newsletters and DK should be complementary – not competing. Newsletters can take things from DK and the other way around.
- 6.9.3 A marketer should be appointed.
- 6.9.4 It should be kept in mind that there are more readers than what the subscription number shows. Many members make DK available to others (at work and in homes).
- 6.9.5 DK is also available in the Internet. Sometimes those interested react on articles from abroad.
- 6.10 The matter of one family magazine is indeed complicated. It has certain advantages on the one hand, but also disadvantages, as shown above.
The different editorial boards as well as Deputies had long discussion regarding the possibility of joining DK and *Vroueblad* on the one hand and *Slingervel* and *Kruispad* on the other, but they could not come to a clear decision and recommendation.
- 6.11 The Deputies also considered the possibility of doing away with the current policy of subscription (for DK), that Synod should budget for making DK available to all members (visiting points) by church councils.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The new editorial board of DK receives the assignment to pay attention to the difficulty of articles and to make articles as accessible as possible to all readers.
- 7.2 The new editorial board appoints a news editor for DK (who works for limited remuneration).
- 7.3 The new editorial board pay attention to the need for a marketer who can handle the matter of subscriber recruitment and marketing of DK. There should be consultation and cooperation with the CJBF-deputies, who are currently focussing on the matter of better marketing of church and theological publications. The marketing of the other magazines should be involved here.
- 7.4 The different editorial board pay attention to how the electronic media can be used as a means to better communication of the Gospel.
- 7.5 The Deputies Church Magazines receive the assignment to investigate how the needs of African language congregations can be met in DK.
- 7.6 The editorial board of all magazines should pay attention to the possibility of joining the magazines as one for family and one for youth. They should report to the next Synod.
- 7.7 The Deputies Church Magazines receive the assignment to pay urgent attention to the possibility of a church magazine that is distributed among all members by church councils without subscribers, and for which Synod plans an estimate per member.

Decisions:

- (i) The Commission has studied the documents and concluded that there is not clarity regarding the joining of *Die Kerkblad*, *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* and *Slingervel* to form one family magazine. Both the status quo and amalgamation have advantages and disadvantages. Consequently the Commission suggests that the to-be-appointed Deputies Church Magazines pay attention to the following matters:
 - (a) The Editorial commissions of the 3 church magazines as well as the Deputies Church Magazines should participate in a workshop mentioned below. During such a workshop the following should be looked at:
 - (b) The advantages and disadvantages of joining *Die Kerkblad*, *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* and *Slingervel* into one family magazine
 - (c) The advantages and disadvantages of the status quo.
 - (ii) The to-be-appointed Deputies Church Magazines should, in cooperation with the Editorial commissions of *Die Kerkblad*, *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* and *Slingervel* either complete the amalgamation, or not.
- 2.6 Subsidy *Kruispad*: *Die Vroueblad* subsidised *Kruispad* with R25 000.
 - 2.7 Festival Year 2009 enjoys the attention of all the magazines and will feature as themes to be used in such editions as deemed appropriate.

- 2.8 Deputies accept the placement of conversations/interviews conducted with different people in the column "Die Redakteur gesels met ..." by the Editorial Panel of *Die Kerkblad*. ["*The Editor talks to ...*"]
- 2.9 The Deputies assisted the editorial panels with matters in response to requests for advice as filed with them by editorial panels.
- 2.10 Deputies ensure the editors, panels and committees of their sincere appreciation for the excellent work and high standards with regard to publication of the magazines.

Decision: Points 2.6 to 2.10 noted.

3. Finances

- 3.1 The Deputies are filled with gratitude when they mention that all the magazines were issued regularly and that a high standard had been maintained throughout.
- 3.2 Balancing the budget has become increasingly difficult as a result of a sharp decline in reader rate. The predicament is compounded by a steady decrease in subscriber numbers.
- 3.3 It is necessary for more computers to be obtained to answer to the needs of the editors of *Die Kerkblad* and *Vroueblad*, but unfortunately the budget could not accommodate such expenditure.
- 3.4 Unfortunately subscription fees are quite frequently in the arrears. Efforts to resort to a system of payment of subscription fees in advance have not yet yielded the desired results.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.4 noted.

4. Reports of the respective editorial panels (church magazines) and recommendations as attached

5. Matters pending Synod's decision

- 5.1 Synod thankfully takes cognisance of the dedicated way in which editorial panels of the different magazines performed their tasks. The magazines were issued regularly and displayed a high standard.

Decision: Approved. Synod thanks the Editors and Editorial commission of *Die Kerkblad*, *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* and *Slingervel* for dedicated and thorough work.

- 5.2 Synod takes note that the editor of *Die Kerkblad* will not be available for the following term, and appoints another editor. The other editors are willing to serve another term.

Decision: Note taken. It is assigned to the to-be-appointed Deputies Church Magazines to appoint an Editor for *Die Kerkblad* as soon as possible in accordance with the existing Synod decisions.

- 5.3 Synod sincerely thanks Prof Amie van Wyk for his excellent work as editor of *Die Kerkblad* during the past six years.

Decision: Approved. Synod thanks prof Amie van Wyk for 6 years of hard work as Editor of *Die Kerkblad*.

- 5.4 Synod expresses its particular gratefulness for the development of the new youth magazine *Kruispad* and wishes to congratulate those involved.

Decision: Noted.

- 5.5 Synod approves of the arrangement that the youth magazine *Kruispad* be part of Deputies Youth Care in future.

- 5.6 Synod is in agreement with the report and its suggestions pertaining to the future format of church magazines.

- 5.7 Synod again appoints Deputies responsible for the regular publication of the church magazines.

- 5.8 Since 1973 the 3 church magazines are read onto tapes by Pioneer printers and made available to visually impaired members virtually free of charge.

Recommendation: That the Deputies Church Magazines introduce this service to congregations.

- 5.9 The Deputies Church Magazines investigate the possibility of marketing the Church Magazines in English.
- 5.10 The Deputies Church Magazines investigate the development of Church magazines among communities speaking African languages.

Decision: Approved.

A. REPORT *DIE KERKBLAD*

1. Introduction

The Report Deputies Church Magazines already contains most of the information with regard to the magazine *Die Kerkblad* (DK), and therefore this Report will include only brief references.

Decision: Noted.

2. Publication

- 2.1 As had been the case during the previous three years *Die Kerkblad* also again appeared regularly as a monthly church magazine the past three years.
- 2.2 Most editions focused on a theme of current importance, but yet included articles on a wide range of topics as well.
- 2.3 The editor provided the editorial article as well as another main article (in some cases two).
- 2.4 Each edition's page layout and finishing touches were taken care of by our permanent member of editorial panel, Johanna Fourie.
- 2.5 According to a previous Synodal decision the magazine *Ons Bondsjeug* would no longer be classified with DK and at present it is being taken care of by a separate editorial panel as the youth magazine *Kruispad*.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.5 noted.

3. Editorial Panel

- 3.1 The editorial panel was composed in the same way as in the past and included (alternatively) the following members: Prof JH van Wyk (editor), Johanna Fourie (permanent member), Prof Francois Viljoen, Rev Fanie Coetzee, Rev Nico Ligthelm and Dr André Grové. Prof Derrick Mashau as well as Mercia Venter and Eunice Strijdom also served on the panel for shorter or longer periods of time. The editorial panel endeavoured to involve, as far as possible, a member from the so-called 'young' churches as well as a female member.
- 3.2 The editorial panel incorporated Dr Pieter Bingle (Cape Town) as news editor. As stands to reason, it was not possible for him to attend the meetings.
- 3.3 Broad editorial panel held meetings at two-monthly intervals and so did the chore editorial panel, that had been appointed by broad editorial panel. All documentation was, however, made available to all members of editorial panels every time for the purpose of possible comment.
- 3.4 Singled out problematic matters not solved by broad editorial panel were referred to Deputies Church Magazines to be solved and finalised.
- 3.5 In the course of every meeting each article and each letter received careful consideration before passed on as suitable for publication. Occasionally an article or letter would be referred to its author again for re-formulation. In some cases, not very often, an article or a letter was declared unfit for publication.
- 3.6 Characteristic of the editorial panel was the hearty co-operation among them, even when difficult church-related decisions had to be made in the midst of stressful times.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.6 noted.

4. Policy

This is more or less the same as had been reported previously:

- 4.1 *Die Kerkblad* is a church magazine in service of the church and the Kingdom of God. It provides information, guidance and spiritual equipment of faith mainly to GKSA's

- members of church. The magazine has positioned itself unambiguously within the framework of the Reformed Confession of Faith and it, for example, strongly and clearly opposed the points of view held by the “Nuwe Hervorming” [*New Reformation*].
- 4.2 Editorial Panel still encountered differences in opinion within the GKSA, probably of a nature and magnitude that had never before been experienced. Editorial Panel endeavoured, to the best of the members’ ability, to address such differences with as much sensitivity and fairness as possible. In cases where a *fully* satisfactory solution failed to be accomplished, the panel would kindly request to be pardoned.
 - 4.3 The editorial panel allowed as much room as possible for debating and open-hearted discussion. The debate was terminated only when it would no longer offer sensible reading matter to the readers in that no fresh arguments were presented or when the discussions no longer had a proper contribution to make towards positive reinforcement.
 - 4.4 Authors of articles and letters were requested to limit articles to 1500 words and letters to 500 words. The occasional exception did occur, but would be based on clearly detectable merit. Continued articles (published as a series) were minimised, mainly to suit readers’ preferences, and were included only by virtue of merit.
 - 4.5 It happened that letters landed on the DK’s table when they were clearly not meant for the DK’s table. In such cases the writers were kindly requested to follow the ‘church road’ and to present their cases to the church meeting.
 - 4.6 The editorial panel showed a willingness to accept well-meant and reinforcing criticism.
- Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.6 noted.**

5. Administration

- 5.1 The administrative office of DK is part of the Administrative Bureau in Potchefstroom and being taken care of by Johanna Fourie. The editor worked from his home in Pretoria and travelled to Potchefstroom for meetings once a month.
- 5.2 V&R Press in Pretoria took responsibility for the printing and the work they did is much appreciated by the editorial panel.
- 5.3 Individual distribution is done from Pretoria, except for a few congregations (especially those in Pretoria) that fetch their magazines at the press itself according to a previously arranged agreement. Some church councils prefer to fetch their church magazines themselves from Administrative Bureau.
- 5.4 DK is electronically available on website <http://www.gksa.org.za/>

Decision: Points 5.1 to 5.4 noted. Synod thanks sr Fourie for her competent assistance with the editorial finishing of *Die Kerkblad*.

6. Finances

- 6.1 Financial data can be found in Admin Bureau’s files.
- 6.2 The subscriber numbers revealed a significant decrease from 7800 in 1995 to only 4820 in 2008. Editorial panel regards this as a matter for concern, also in the light of the fact that money generated from subscription fees would show a similar decline. More is said on this topic in the other, more extended report.
- 6.3 The editorial panel filed a request with **Feeskomitee 150** [*Festival 150 Committee*] for a separate amount to be allocated in the budget towards the festival edition in February 2009 as it is the intention to print and distribute more than the usual number of editions in the run of this special occasion.

Decision: Points 6.1 to 6.3 noted.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Synod thankfully takes note of the regular monthly appearance of DK and thanks the outgoing editorial panel for the work done by all the members.
- 7.2 Johanna Fourie executed her work to precision and with much dedication and is thanked accordingly by Synod.

- 7.3 Synod appoints an editor who, in collaboration with re-elected Deputies Church Magazines, composes a newly-elected editorial panel along with which to function until the next Synod.
- 7.4 Synod approves of the present editorial panel's remaining actively involved until the appearance of DK's February 2009 edition (Festival 150). The incoming editorial panel takes on publication from March 2009 onwards. The reason for doing so is that the February 2009 edition has been scheduled as the festival edition and collection of articles had to start in 2008. The newly-appointed editorial panel will nevertheless have to start planning for 2009 towards the end of January 2009.
- 7.5 The newly-appointed editorial panel must pay special attention to activities surrounding the GKSA's Festival 150 arrangements. In support of the newly-appointed editorial panel the present panel has already started on the broad planning for the March to May editions 2009, especially as the beginning of 2009 is marked with special festival-related matters. The newly-appointed editorial panel will also have to keep in mind the 500th remembrance of church reformer Johannes Calvin's date of birth (10 July).

Decision: Approved.

8. Farewell

The editor, together with the rest of the present panel, herewith say farewell. It has been an honour and a joy to be of service to the GKSA and the Kingdom of God in this way. We lived through times of tension in both church and community, but the Lord bestowed His mercy upon us to use what strength and insight we had received to the honour of God. We are acutely aware of our shortcomings, but we trust that the Lord will bless the good we have done.

Decision: Noted.

B. REPORT *SLINGERVEL*

1. Editorial Policy

1.1 *Introductory*

Slingervel is published as a church magazine with school-attending youth as target group. It falls within the supervision of Deputies Church Magazines of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA), assisted by the Editorial Panel Committee. *Slingervel* is not GKSA's official mouthpiece, but nevertheless owned and published by GKSA.

1.2 *Aims*

- 1.2.1 To guide and accompany the readers, *i.e.* school- and church-attending young people, and to furnish them with Scriptural truths to be applied by them to the time in which they live.
- 1.2.2 To actualise 1.2.1 above (guidance and accompaniment) by means of Scripture-related contemplations, articles and columns touching on problematic areas in the lives of young people, even if doing so occurs subtly.
- 1.2.3 To provide material for relaxation, *inter alia* crossword puzzles of different kinds, quizzes, drawing and colouring in.
- 1.2.4 To publish a story suitable for nursery school and early primary school children.
- 1.2.5 To stimulate and encourage the young readers' participation by means of peer group correspondence and mutual interests, e.g. pen-friends, e-friends and sms-friends as well as a letter box and a birthday nook.
- 1.2.6 To provide fun pages that would mirror sound and balanced views.
- 1.2.7 To allow room for their own contributions.
- 1.2.8 To focus on page layout and presentation that would be stimulating and favourable to the target group, and to utilise modern journalistic approaches for accomplishing this.
- 1.2.9 To evaluate *Slingervel* on a regular basis, taking into account current milieu-related circumstances and issues of school-attending young people and children.

Decision: Points 1.1 to 1.2.9 noted.

2. Editorial Panel

Dr Nico van der Merwe (Editor), Joey Fourie (Typography and layout), Marina Kotze (Junior Columns, Correspondence Columns, *i.e.* pen-friends, e-friends, sms-friends), Riana Jonker (Birthday Nook), Susan Lourens (Book Reviews), Rina Myburgh (Riddles and Brain Teasers), Tersia van der Merwe (Crossword puzzles, Letter- and Number Games), Attie Venter (Science articles), Rika du Plessis-Cloete (monthly Story for Juniors and Serial Story for Teenagers).

Decision: Noted.

3. Fulfilment of Commission

- 3.1 *Slingervel* was published regularly and all members of the editorial panel deserve to be thanked for the diligence, dedication, enthusiasm and eagerness with which they fulfilled their duties. A special word of thanks and appreciation goes to Joey Fourie as she is so precise, thorough and prompt in fulfilling her enormous task.
- 3.2 To have the December issue of *Slingervel* readily available to readers before the holidays proved to be difficult every year. During the past three years a combined issue (November-December) has been compiled and distributed at the end of October. Editorial panel trusts that doing so will address the problem successfully.
- 3.3 Editorial panel endeavoured to be faithful in bringing the aims of the panel's policy into effect.
- 3.4 Particular attention, more so than in the past, was paid to the needs of teenagers, but without diminishing content matter meant for the more junior groups. At all times the intention with *Slingervel* is to address and accommodate the covenant youth in some way or another, from nursery stages throughout puberty and on to adolescence.
- 3.5 Editorial panel made efforts to maintain the balance between religious material and other reading matter, e.g. of a humorous nature but still suitable for Christians. *Slingervel* kept the Christian character of the magazine in mind all the time and tried to honour it, build on it and spread it.
- 3.6 Ample room was allowed for readers themselves to participate and contribute, e.g. own work.
- 3.7 Readers' response was not satisfactory. The editorial panel cannot but relate some of the blame to a present way of life (milieu) in which young people grow up. Better responses were obtained from other media such as e-mail correspondence and sms messages. It would appear that young ones no longer write letters as used to be the case.
- 3.8 With regard to the image of *Slingervel* eight pages of full colour are at present included.
- 3.9 It was with joy and gratitude that the 50th anniversary of *Slingervel* could be celebrated with a special edition in August 2008. Its 50 years of existence (since August 1958) cannot be remembered without acknowledging the grace of the Lord. The work and devotion of 4 editors also came to mind: Dr Klaas van Wyk de Vries (August 1958 – March 1961), Dr Sarel du Plessis (April 1961 – December 1965), Prof. Pieter Buys (January 1966 – December 1999), Dr Nico van der Merwe since January 2000. At the same time appreciation could be expressed with regard to a large number of sisters and brothers, all of whom made valuable contributions towards the success of the magazine in the course of the 50 years. May God bless *Slingervel* in years to come.

Decision: Points 3.1 to 3.9 noted. Synod thanks dr Nico van der Merwe and the Editorial commission of *Slingervel* for the tasteful finishing of the magazine.

C. REPORT DIE GEREFORMEERDE VROUEBLAD

1. Introduction

On behalf of the Editorial Panel of *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* (VB) it still remains a pleasure to report on the magazine and related matters. By the grace and provision of the Lord we had sufficient material to publish a complete edition each month. According to reader opinion the magazine is still regarded as popular and readworthy.

Decision: Noted.

2. Publication

As mentioned above the VB appeared regularly each month. During 2006 and 2007 we launched an experiment by publishing one quite sizeable edition only towards the December holidays. This afforded the Editor a welcome breather as all the copies/contributions that would have been used in January were included in this so-called holiday edition. Doing so indeed meant that nobody had suffered any loss and the results were favourable.

The magazine's contents varied from month to month depending on the available copies. The majority of articles that were received were submitted of contributors' own accord and not merely in response to requests. Matters of current importance received a fair share of attention from time to time. However, the forum presented by the magazine catered for women (others too, but church members mainly) to have their contributions included for publication. Every now and then congregation-related activities were entered in the column referred to as 'Congregation Mosaic' and from this one can conclude that many a creative or exciting event happens in congregations.

In each edition the editor presented an editorial letter and at times an article of educational or scriptural nature.

Karien Brink, graphic artist, took care of the page layout in a highly professional and creative manner. Many of the cover page and other photographs were taken by her husband, Roni Brink, who kindly shared them with us.

Discussions on VB as a separate magazine are taking place at present. In the course of forthcoming Synod a decision in this respect will be made. According to informal enquiries and research pertaining to the topic (per telephone as well as during personal interviews/conversations) it would seem that the majority of VB's readers are still satisfied and strongly in favour of a separate magazine. The Editorial Panel considered the possibility of a single family magazine, well aware of the advantages and disadvantages accompanying such a step. No final decision has been reached as everybody realises that a change may not necessarily mean an improvement.

Decision: Noted.

3. Editorial Panel

The following people were members of the editorial panel : Dr Marina van Loggerenberg (Editor), Prof Jacques van der Elst, Rev Nico Botha, Mrs Ann Ramage, Mrs Corli le Roux, and Mrs Karien Brink in advisory capacity as graphic artist.

The Editorial Panel did not convene meetings on a strictly regular basis as communication mainly occurred via telephone conferences and other electronic media (e.g. e-mail). Such facilities were also used for sending and receiving material to be evaluated for publication.

As VB's focus is as a rule not necessarily on matters of contention, heated argumentation seldom, if ever, forms part of the agenda. In a few rare cases the editorial panel received an enquiry and the editor responded accordingly.

Decision: Noted.

4. Policy

DIE GEREFORMEERDE VROUEBLAD

1. Introductory

Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad is published as a church magazine with Reformed women as target group, but not to the exclusion of the broader church-aware reader public. It falls within the supervision of Deputies Church Magazines of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA), assisted by the Editorial Panel Committee. The magazine Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad is not GKSA's official mouthpiece, but is owned and published by GKSA.

2. Aims of Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad

The overall aim is to be of service in the light of the Word and accordingly to provide principle-bound guidance to the Reformed woman. This would include chore aspects such as the following:

- 2.1 *Contemplation of Scriptural truths, e.g. by means of the inclusion of discussions/explanations/ponderings in correlation with excerpts from Scripture as well as the application of specific parts of Scripture in the course of articles that are presented.*
- 2.2 *Presentation of actual matters in such a way as would reflect a Scripture-based perspective.*
- 2.3 *Article material that answers to the needs of a variety of age groups.*
- 2.4 *Inclusion of newsworthy material pertaining to activities (especially those of the women) in the broad church context.*
- 2.5 *Publishing readers' views in the letters column.*

3. Layout and Journalistic Approach

In order for the Editor and panel members to answer to the aims as indicated above, they would have to utilise all the aids they have at their disposal, and a contemporary journalistic approach in their planning and presentation.

4. Guidelines with regard to the nature of contributions

- 4.1 *Any aspect that pertains to the full spectrum of being a believer can be touched on in contributions. If related to specifically the world and life of the female, then, understandably, it will enjoy preference.*
- 4.2 *Contributions can be focused on aspects such as growth in faith, involvement in a variety of areas (individual/church/community), living as a Christian, being of service in the kingdom, and other similarly relevant issues.*
- 4.3 *Articles should reflect matters of current importance, e.g. problems of the present way of living and should recommend practical coping mechanisms to support the believer. The important part is that the material must be identifiable as different from what could be encountered in a secular magazine. Accomplishment of this is possible by elucidating aspects that would support and reinforce the woman of faith as being "in keeping with time and environment at present".*
- 4.4 *"Preaching" should be avoided.*
- 4.5 *The article should embrace more than merely relating a personal account or description of an event/experience that in reality is important to the writer only. Contributions must be representative of a broader dimension: one of the questions to be asked is whether the contribution would or could be meaningful or valuable to the woman of faith in general. In the event of including a personal observation or experience, the presentation must be such that a generally accepted or valid faith-related truth or application would be integrated convincingly as part of the discourse.*
- 4.6 *It stands to reason that readers' tributes to individual family members/persons would be of importance to a very limited reader circle only. It is suggested that these be sent to congregational leaflets or Die Kerkblad, accompanying fees included.*
- 4.7 *Poems and rhymes are only very rarely published.*

5. Evaluation of contributions

- 5.1 *Each member of the Editorial Panel Committee receives a copy of all the contributions and must evaluate these contributions independently. Motivation for acceptance must be submitted in writing.*
- 5.2 *Similarities and agreements in recommendations will determine whether the contribution will be processed further for publication.*

- 5.3 If Editorial Panel Committee's evaluations reveal too many differences concerning the inclusion, the particular contribution will be discussed again during the Panel meeting that takes place every two months.
- 5.4 The editor and sub-editors may, in collaboration with the author, condense the articles or elaborate on parts of the content or paraphrase if deemed necessary.

Decision: Point 4 noted [polity].

5. Administration

- 5.1 The VB's administration is taken care of by the editor on a voluntary basis, who is sometimes, if necessary or requested, assisted by other members of the editorial panel. Even the computer and printer, scanner and fax facilities belong to the editor.
- 5.2 Printing is done by V&R Press in Pretoria and co-operation with Ludick Venter is pleasant. We feel particular appreciation for the manner in which we can work together with him.
- 5.3 Distribution is also done from Pretoria. It has occasionally happened that the magazines were not delivered quite in time or that delays occurred as a result of certain arrangements.
- 5.4 The VB is also available electronically, included in website <http://www.gksa.org.za>

Decision: Points 5.1 to 5.4 noted.

6. Finances

- 6.1 Administrative Bureau is in charge of all this magazine's financial matters. Information in this respect will be reflected in Administrative Bureau's files and should be obtained from that source if necessary.
- 6.2 Subscriber numbers are dropping.

Decision: Points 6.1 and 6.2 noted.

7. Conclusion

It has been a great privilege to be part of all the VB affairs and to act as editor for the past six years. I am willing to serve as editor in the term to come. May the decision pertaining to the future of the magazines be a good one and may the blessing of the Lord rest on it.

Decision: Noted. Synod thanks dr Marina van Loggerenberg and the Editorial commission of *Die Gereformeerde Vroueblad* for sustained and good work.

D. REPORT BONDSJEUG/KRUISPAD

1. Deputies

Synod 2006 appointed Dr AJ Krüger as Deputy for the magazine *Ons Bondsjeug* (Acta 2006:751). Rev Paul Grobler (Rustenburg-West) and sister Adri Breed (NWU) were co-opted as Deputies.

Decision: Noted.

2. Synod's Commission 1985/2006

- 2.1 Deputies Church Magazines approached Synod 2006 with the request that Synod provide guidance with regard to the magazine *Bondsjeug*. In response Dr AJ Krüger was appointed as Deputy for *Bondsjeug*.
- 2.2 No specific commission was expressed. A review of Synodal decisions revealed that Synod 1985 issued a commission that *Bondsjeug* be published as separate magazine independent of *Die Kerkblad* of which it had apparently been a supplement since 1981 (Acta, 1985:77).
- 2.3 The reader target of *Bondsjeug* includes high school children, students and working young people (1985:77).
- 2.4 The commission to deputy is, therefore, based on decisions Synod 1985.

Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.4 noted.

3. Matters Synod takes cognisance of

3.1 *Course of events*

- 3.1.1 After conclusion of Synod 2006 Rev Paul Grobler (at that time student theology), under the provision of the Lord, enrolled for practica in Youth Care with the new editor of *Bondsjeug*.
- 3.1.1 Discussions followed, including relevant topics such as characteristics of a youth magazine and related requirements attached to it, especially those aspects that would assist in effectively (purposefully and practically) addressing the present youth (target group). He made several contributions and displayed great enthusiasm for the project. He was then (February 2006) co-opted as member of the deputy group.
- 3.1.2 Rev Grobler initiated a variety of steps to be taken and, *inter alia*, gathered a number of skilful young people that formed a team and worked together towards re-establishing the magazine. These young people included (mainly) Reformed post-graduate professionals and students from NWU and TSP.
- 3.1.3 The magazine would be known as *Kruispad*. In this way two characteristics or qualities of the magazine are being elucidated, *i.e.* :
 - 3.1.3.1 That the magazine is bent on serving the young people in the light of the cross of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
 - 3.1.3.2 That the magazine reflects an awareness of several cross roads by which young people are confronted in their daily lives (e.g. career-related choices, partners for life, involvement in church, and so on). The magazine wishes to guide young people in the light of the cross with regard to all such aspects.
- 3.1.4 Early in 2007 a pamphlet of introduction (called *Padkaart* – meaning road map) was forwarded to GKSA congregations and the first issues of *Kruispad* in February 2007. The first issues of the magazine were sent free of charge with the intention of inspiring church councils and individual readers to subscribe. At present similar distribution is still being done.
- 3.1.5 Since then the magazine has been published regularly every two months.

3.2 *Important points of view*

- 3.2.1 *Kruispad* is a contemporary magazine that contains Reformed-related material, focused on important current affairs and directed at developing believers (17 to 23 years of age) in order to provide them with guidance pertaining to informed choices for enhancing their growth in faith.
- 3.2.2 This vision is put into practice by means of an inter-active medium that addresses relevant themes to inspire young people to continue along the road of the cross of Christ towards maturity in faith, so that God will be honoured and the church be built.
- 3.2.3 The magazine also has a website (www.kruispad.net), presenting a variety of columns and creating the opportunity to communicate with the editorial panel.

3.3 *Organisation of Kruispad in future*

- 3.3.1 During the process of re-publishing of *Bondsjeug/Kruispad* it became evident that repeated commissions existed between *Kruispad* and Deputies Youth Care (both, for example, have been commissioned about a magazine and a website).
- 3.3.2 Meetings with Deputies Youth Care were convened on several occasions, and this resulted in a decision to combine and co-ordinate efforts. This, in turn, led to a decision to recommend to Synod that *Kruispad* be part of Comissions Deputies Youth Care in future.
- 3.3.3 Reporting on *Kruispad* will already take place as early as Synod 2009, as part of the Report Deputies Youth Care.

Decision: Points 3.1.1 to 3.3.3 noted. Synod thanks dr AJ Krüger and rev Paul Grobler for their input. Synod further expresses its appreciation towards the young members who launched *Kruispad* with enthusiasm.

4. Financial matters

- 4.1 Synod 2006 included no budgeting for *Bondsjeug/Kruispad*.
- 4.2 *Vroueblad* kindly contributed R25 000 towards the initial development of *Kruispad*.

- 4.3 We hold the view that a magazine like *Kruispad* cannot function independently financially. Future financial management of *Kruispad* is reported to Deputies Youth Care and taken care of budgetwise.
- 4.4 In the wake of the integration of the work of *Kruispad* and Deputies Youth Care followed volunteering congregations, prepared to co-operate and to donate money towards the global ministry to the young people of GKSA. Thus far financing *Kruispad* depended on such donations as well as suscription fees.

Decision: Points 4.1 to 4.4 noted. Synod expresses its thanks and appreciation towards the donators of *Kruispad*.

5. Matters pending Synod's decision

- 5.1 Synod approves of the developments within the magazine, the transfer of responsibility for the magazine to Deputies Youth Care included.
- 5.2 Synod thanks the Lord for a magazine that serves the young people of GKSA and that will be read and marketed even in wider circles than the GKSA only.
- 5.3 Synod conveys congratulations to Rev Paul Grobler for establishment of the magazine.
- 5.4 Synod expresses gratitude to include all those who combined efforts to make the publishing of the magazine possible and in particular also sr Adri Breed as first editor: Content of the magazine.
- 5.5 Synod approves of the transfer of the commission surrounding *Bondsjeug/Kruispad* to Deputies Youth Care.
- 5.6 Synod assigns Rev Paul Grobler as Deputy Youth Care with commission: *Kruispad*.

Decision: Approved. The following recommendations for *Kruispad* are also approved:

1. That the youth magazine *Kruispad* be expanded under the leadership of the to-be-appointed Deputy Group *Kruispad* (Youth Care), with consideration of previous work done.
2. That Sr Maureen van Helden is appointed as editor of *Kruispad*. If the appointed Editor can not fulfil her duties any longer, *Kruispad* should appoint a new editor in collaboration with the Deputies Church Magazines.
3. That the Editor of *Kruispad* forms part of the Deputies Church Magazines.
4. That the to-be-appointed Deputies Church Magazines, in collaboration with Deputies Youth Care, appoint and editorial commission *Kruispad* to support the Editor.
5. That the to-be-appointed Deputies Church Magazines organize a workshop as soon as possible at which experts from the active media industry are used to compile a dynamic business plan for *Kruispad* with the aim of *Kruispad* becoming self-sufficient as soon as possible.

Motivation: the current and previous Editors of *Kruispad* has expressed the need for a dynamic business plan for *Kruispad*.

6. That all congregations are requested to support initiatives of *Kruispad*.