

THE CHURCH ORDER OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

Articles, Regulations, Policy, Related / Clarifying
Resolutions
as determined by the General Synod in October 2019



Compiled by the
General Task Team Legal Affairs
of the General Synod

PREFACE

The Dutch Reformed Church is a community of faith founded on the Bible as the infallible Word of God; united by our faith in the triune God and acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In accordance with the Word of God the doctrine of the church is expressed in the Forms of Unity, namely the Belgic Confessions, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt (*vide* Article 1).

Based on the principles and values in the Word of God, and assisted by our doctrinal standards, the Dutch Reformed Church structures its own internal order based on its inalienable calling and internal competence as church of the Lord Jesus Christ which is founded on its right to freedom of religion (*vide* Article 2).

With this Church Order, regulations, Related and Clarifying Resolutions the Synod of 2019 endeavoured to express the church's missional calling in church orderly fashion.

Therefore, this Church Order wishes to contribute to our defining identity as Dutch Reformed Church and should not be viewed as an instrument which hems in our ecclesiastical endeavours in the local church or in the wider denomination, but will be utilised as anchors to which the church may cling to remain standing when the while the waters roll which often threaten to drive us asunder. Using the Church Order, the point of departure should never be sociological-juridical. Therefore, the Church Order may not be utilised as a juridical legal document to deal with church matters in the context of the time. We utilise the Church Order as a theological-ethical order by which we deal with church matters with reference to Biblical truth and ethical values in an ecclesiastical manner. Therefore, it should never become a rod with which to beat up one another, rather a staff with which we guide and escort each other.

A special word of appreciation to a very capable team of registrars of our ten synods who had a lion's share before, during and after the General Synod of 2019, in preparing and finalising this Church Order book. A special word of thanks to dr. Heinrich Theunissen (Secretary of the General Synod Task Team for Legal matters) for finalising of the documents and manuscript, as well as the others who gave special input with regard to the editing and typographical outlay of the Church Order Book. Every member of the General Task Team for Legal Matters whose precise inputs were indispensable.

Dr Dewyk Ungerer
REGISTRAR

General Synod 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CHURCH ORDER

CHAPTER 1

THE CONFESSION, NATURE AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH	1
---	----------

CHAPTER 2

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH	8
General Stipulations	8
Ministers of the Word	8
Elders and deacons	11

CHAPTER 3

THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH	12
General stipulations	12
Particular stipulations	13
Church council	13
Presbytery	13
Synod	14
General Synod	16

CHAPTER 4

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH	18
Public worship	18
The sacraments	18
Baptism	19
Holy Communion	19
Youth Ministry	19
Pastoral Care	19
Congregational Ministry	19
Missions/witness (<i>Missio Dei</i>)	
Ministry of benevolence	
Ministry of the believers	

Doctrine and current affairs

Stewardship

Labour relations

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE

Purpose and directives

Church supervision and discipline

Sins subject to censure

Members, officials, licensees and employees

Church Discipline

Disciplinary measures

Appeals

Abolition of disciplinary measures

CHAPTER 6

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CHURCH

Church and State

Church, society and free association

Church and education

Church and ecumenical relations

Interim Order

Reformed Churches

REGULATIONS

FUNCTIONING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

- 1. Regulations for the Functioning of the General Synod (GS)**
25
- 2. Regulations for the General Synodical Moderamen (GSM)**
27
- 3. Regulations for the General Synodical Business Team (GSBT)**
31
- 4. Regulations (Rules) of Order**
32
- 5. Regulations for the General Task Team Archives (GTTA)**
40

6.	Regulations for the General Task Team Bible translation, - exposition and distribution (GTBTED)	42
7.	Regulations for the General Task Team Funds and Assets (GTTFA)	44
8.	Regulations for the General Task Team Legal Matters (GTTL)	46
9.	Regulations for the General Task Team for Ministers (GTTM)	47
10.	Regulations for the General Governing Body (GGB)	51

MINISTERS

11.	Regulations for the Training and Licensing of ministers of the Word	54
12.	Regulations for the Competency of Ministers of the Word, Candidates and Emeriti	66
13.	Regulations for the Calling, Induction, Demission and Superannuation of Ministers of the Word	77
14.	Regulations for Full Time Ministers of the Word	85
15.	Regulations for Part Time Ministers of the Word	87
16.	Regulations for Tent Maker (Self-Supported) Ministers	90
17.	Regulations for Fixed Term Ministers of the Word	91
18.	Regulations for Transition Ministry	94
19.	Regulations for Local ministers and Auxiliary ministers	97
20.	Regulation for Leave of Ministers of the Word	99

TUG EN DISSCIPLINE

21.	Regulation for the Management of Labour Relations for Ministers of the Word at Disability and Unfitness	103
22.	Regulations for Discipline and Admonition	109

APPEALS AND OBJECTION

23.	Regulations for Review, Appeals, Petition (Gravamen) and Objection on Procedures followed	117
-----	--	-----

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSETS

24.	Regulations for Ecclesiastical Assets	126
-----	--	-----

CONGREGATIONS

25.	Regulations for the DRC as a missional church	138
26.	Regulation for the Relationships with other Churches and Groups	144
27.	Regulation for the Multiplication, Combining, Unification and Merging of Congregations	155

RESOLUTIONS WHICH SUPPLEMENT AND CLARIFY CHURCH ORDER ARTICLES AND REGULATIONS

THE CONFESSION AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH

1.	The Bible	164
2.	Principles, Resolutions, Guidelines and Manuals	166
3.	Tenets of Faith	167
4.	Confession of Belhar	168

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

5.	Minister of the Word: Letter of Calling and Procedures at Calling 168	
6.	Calling of Ministers of the Word within the Family of DR Churches 168	
7.	Calling of Licensees from Churches of the DR Church Family outside the borders of South Africa to the DR Church 169	
8.	Licensing with Limited Commission	169
9.	Exchange of Placements	169
10.	Ministry in Extraordinary Circumstances	175
11.	Transition Ministry 175	

12.	Regulations for Lay ministers (ordained Elders and Deacons)	175
13.	Ministers of the Word, Auxiliary Ministers and Local ministers	176
14.	Ministers of the Word: Age of retirement	177

DIE VERGADERINGE VAN DIE KERK

15.	DR Church Seal	177
16.	Telephone-/ Electronic Meetings and Voting	177

THE SACRAMENTS

17.	Baptism	178
18.	Baptism and Holy Communion: Coherence of the Sacraments in a Covenant Theology Perspective	183
19.	Holy Communion	184
20.	Guidelines for the Celebration of Holy Communion outside the Worship Service	186

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

21.	Ministry in Foreign Lands	186
22.	Hymns	186
23.	Copy Rights and Hymnals	187
24.	Church Membership	187
25.	Church Media	190
26.	Guidelines to Employers regarding Remuneration	191

CHURCH SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE

27.	Guide lines for Resolving of Ecclesiastical Disputes	192
-----	--	-----

OUTWARD / ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CHURCH

28.	South African Manifesto for Religious Rights and Freedoms	192
29.	Church Re-unification	196

TOPICAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS

30.	Ministry of Deliverance	199
31.	Ecology	201
32.	Day of the Covenant as Day of Reconciliation	202

33. Land Reform and Rural Development	202
34. Same-sex Unions	204
35. Marriage and Living Together out of wedlock	206

A TO Z – POLICY

208

INTERIM ORDER

208

CODE OF ETHICS FOR MINISTERS OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

217

THE CHURCH ORDER

CHAPTER 1

THE CONFESSION, NATURE AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH

Article 1

The Dutch Reformed Church is based on the Bible as the holy and infallible Word of God. The doctrine which the church confesses as in agreement with the Word of God, is expressed in the Forms of Unity as determined by the Synod of Dordt in 1618-19, namely the thirty-seven articles of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the five Canons of Dordt.

Article 2

The Dutch reformed Church is called by the Triune God to participate in the mission of God in the world. The church is edified by the Holy Spirit to serve the honour of God and proclaim the ministry of reconciliation and redemption in Christ.

Article 3

- 3.1 Whereas the Word of God demands that everything in the congregation of Christ should be done in a proper and orderly fashion (1 Corinthians 14:40), following articles provide a number of stipulations for the life and work of the Church, aimed at the fulfilment of its task and calling in accordance with Holy Scriptures and the Confessions.
- 3.2 These stipulations deal with the offices in the Church, the assemblies of the Church, the work of the Church, governance and discipline of the Church and the external relationships of the Church.
- 3.3 The Dutch Reformed Church determines her own internal order based on its inalienable calling and internal competence as church of Jesus Christ and her right to freedom of religion.

CHAPTER 2

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

2.1 General stipulations

Article 4

4.1. Christ performs His ministry in the church and the kingdom through His Word and Spirit and does so by inter alia:

4.1.1 the ministry of the three particular offices of the church, namely:

- That of the minister of the Word¹, auxiliary ministers² and Local ministers³
- That of elder
- That of deacon

To equip believers for their ministry in the church and the world; and

4.1.2 the ministry of all believers.

4.2. The three particular offices are equal but are distinguished in their charge and work. In the execution of their calling, no office bearer may rule over other office bearers, as Christ is the only Head, King and Master of His church.

Article 5

No one may serve in one of the particular offices in the church of Christ if that person was not:

- called (or elected) in a legitimate way;
- received the necessary approbation, and
- was inducted.

2.2 The Ministers of the Word

Article 6

6.1 For admission to the ministry of the Word the requirements are:

6.1.1 suitability for the office

6.1.2 thorough theological training and

6.1.3 the signing of the declaration for licensing which incorporates endorsing the Forms of Unity.

6.2 General Synod determines the requirements for the training, the form it takes and supervision thereof, and the places where it will be undertaken at the recommendation of the General Governing Body for Theological Training.

6.3 The General Governing Body for Theological Training is appointed by General Synod in accordance with *Regulation 10 for the General Governing Body for Theological Training*.

6.4 Where more than one synod is involved in a local governing body for historical or other reasons, the synods concerned agree on the composition of the governing body. Other synods are entitled to appoint one representative each in the governing body, for their own account.

6.4.1 The care for, control and supervision of the training of ministers fall under the jurisdiction of the local governing body

6.4.2 The local governing body is responsible for the selection, guidance, supervision, examining and recommendation for admission to the ministry of

¹ Ministers of the Word refers to the Afrikaans Predikant which may also be rendered :bedienaar van die die Woord” (as in the English terminology), “leraar” – Teacher, “evangeliedienaar” – minister of the Gospel and these are interchangeable

² The DRC introduced a second tier of clergy which is referred to as “Diensleraars” rendered here and elsewhere in the Church Order as *Auxiliary ministers* – people ordained with specific training for limited ministry

³ The DRC introduced a third tier of clergy which is referred to as “Standplaasleraars” rendered here and elsewhere in the Church Order as *Local ministers* referring to someone ordained with specific training for ministry to a specific group, limited ordination for ministry to the particular group the initially ordained for

theological students. These responsibilities may be performed by a committee(s) on behalf of the governing body.

6.4.3 The DR Church faculty is more specifically responsible for the academic training of the students.

6.4.4 One member of the DR Church faculty serves in the governing body in an advisory capacity.

6.5 The governing body appoints a candidate's committee composed of as many members as it deems necessary, of qualified persons nominated by the various synods. These persons need not be members of the governing body. The examining committee is charged with:

6.5.1 The selection and recommendation to the governing body of ministry of candidates after completion of their theological studies.

6.5.2 Officiating at *colloquium doctum*.

Article 7

The granting of the right to be called as a Minister of the Word, the maintaining and termination of such right, is governed by General Synod or its delegated body.

Article 8

8.1 A Minister is called for service in a local congregation by the church council of the congregation with the approbation of the congregation and is authorised by the presbytery.

8.2 A Minister is nominated for service in the denomination by a church assembly or its proxy, with approval by the denomination and is authorised by the synod legal-/Church Order commission

8.3 The induction of the Minister for service in a congregation is done upon authorisation by the presbytery or its proxy.

8.4 The induction of a minister for service in the denomination is done upon authorisation by the synod legal-/Church Order commission.

8.5 The induction of a of candidate minister is done with the laying on of hands

8.6 A minister who accepted a call to another congregation, or the nomination for service in the denomination, receives a Deed of Demission from the assembly in whose service the minister was

8.7 A minister who retires, receives a Deed of Emeritus.

Article 9

9.1 The focus of the office of the minister is ministry of the Word in all its forms

9.2 The minister is called to be a follower of Christ and to dedicate his life in service of the Lord and His church

9.3 The minister functions within a congregation, the denomination and in the ministry of the denomination in the world

9.4 In the congregation a minister accepts responsibility for discernment, studying and preaching the Word of God, serving the sacraments, the ministry of intercession and discipleship. In conjunction with the other offices, the minister is responsible for:

- worship services,
- edification of the congregation,
- teaching and equipping the members for their ministry,
- the congregation's ministry in the world,
- leading and organising the congregation,
- exercising Christian love and discipline,
- pastoral care,
- church planting
- continued development of ministry competencies.

Church councils, in conjunction with the minister, discern how these responsibilities are dispensed of in line with particular gifts, and incorporate it in an employment contract.

9.5 The minister also participates in the joint ministry of the denomination in the various church meetings and ecumenical relationships

9.6 As part of the ministry of the denomination to the world, the denomination makes provisions for the manners in which the minister serves in the denomination and in the world.

Article 10

A minister of the Word may not perform any official duties (See Article 9 above) to members of another congregation without the permission of the church council of the congregation in question.

Article 11

11.1 Ministers may leave the service of the church only for grave and serious reasons. The person ceases being a minister when the service in the congregation / denomination is vacated to accept another position. The person may, however, receive prior permission from the General Task Team for Ministers of the Word to retain competence as a candidate minister.

11.2 Such retention of competence can be granted only if the position accepted is spiritual in character associated directly with the proclamation of the Word and is considered beneficial to the Dutch Reformed Church.

11.3 If there are other substantial reasons, retention of competence may only be granted if the General Task Team for Ministerial Affairs, based on recommendations by the church council and the presbytery, conclude that there are adequate *bona fide*⁴ reasons to accept another position.

Article 12

12.1 Ministers are employed in the office for ministry by a church assembly to (church council, presbytery, synod or General Synod).

12.2 The minister, as one called by the Lord through His church, is accountable to the Lord and the church assembly concerned.

⁴ Reasons are *bona fide* when a minister resigns from his/her work without any hint of disciplinary action against him/her. Reasons may include that the minister presently does not see his/her way open to continue with the ministry.

- 12.3 The church assembly affords ministers the respect and support needed to enable them to discharge their office and calling by the Lord and His church effectively.
- 12.4 Employment and termination of employment is performed by the church assembly concerned in whose service the minister is.
- 12.5 Only persons with the necessary competency (cf. Art 7 of the Church Order) may serve in a congregation or the denomination as a minister
- 12.6 The services of a minister are terminated with immediate effect upon the loss of competence in accordance with *Regulation 12 on the Competence of Ministers, Candidate Ministers and Emeriti*.
- 12.7 The church assembly concerned, may terminate the services of a minister in the following instances:
- 12.7.1 On grounds of misconduct
- 12.7.2 On grounds of deficiency in ministry competencies, or poor performance
- 12.7.3 On grounds of the ministry – and operational requirements of the congregation / denomination

Article 13

The congregation or denomination which employs a minister, takes care of the person's spiritual-, emotional- and physical needs, is co-responsible for the person's professional development and is responsible for the remuneration agreed to.

Article 14

- 14.1 A minister retires at the age determined by General Synod.
- 14.2 A minister who retires from service for reasons of poor health, age or otherwise, and qualifies for it, receive benefits in accordance with the relevant rule of the pension fund at stake. Sufficient provision should also be made for the widow/widower and orphans of a minister of the Word.

2.3 Elders and Deacons

Article 15

- 15.1 At their installation elders and deacons subscribe to the confession of the church.
- 15.2 There should be a regular retirement of elders and deacons. Each church council determines the period of service for elders and deacons.

Article 16

- 16.1 The office or ministry of the elder centres on spiritual discernment and guidance, provision, management and supervision, and includes:
- 16.1.1 the equipping of members for their ministry
- 16.1.2 the governing of the congregation
- 16.1.3 home visitation
- 16.1.4 exercising supervision and discipline
- 16.1.5 guarding over the purity of doctrine
- 16.1.6 co-responsibility for catechism
- 16.1.7 the vocation to lead others to Christ

- 16.1.8 leading worship services where the church council and presbytery gave permission
- 16.1.9 discipleship, and
- 16.1.10 other charges determined by the church council in the light of Art 16.1.
- 16.2 The church council, with consideration of Art 16.1.1 to 16.1.7 of the Church Order, determines the area of responsibility of each elder.

Article 17

- 17.1 The office or ministry of the deacon centres on practical ministry. It starts in the worship service and from there it extends to the congregation and the world in which the members live. The office of deacon includes:
 - 17.1.1 the equipping of members for their ministry
 - 17.1.2 the uplifting, comforting and support of all who are in need of diaconal care in some way,
 - 17.1.3 the collection and spending of means required for diaconal ministry,
 - 17.1.4 the organisation and management of the diaconal ministry of the congregation,
 - 17.1.5 leading worship services where the church council and presbytery gave permission
 - 17.1.6 other charges determined by the church council in line with Art 17.1.
- 17.2 the church council, with consideration of Art 17.1.1 to 17.1.4 of the Church Order, determines the area of responsibility of each deacon.

CHAPTER 3

THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE CHURCH

3.1 General Stipulations

Article 18

There are four church assemblies: Church Council, Presbytery, Synod and General Synod.

Article 19

Supervision, governing and discipline in the Church are entrusted to these assemblies.

Article 20

- 20.1 These assemblies have, each according to its own nature and function, an ecclesiastical authority conferred upon them by Christ.
- 20.2 The authority of the presbytery according to its own nature and function over the church council is the same as that of the synod and the General Synod each according to its own nature and function, over the denomination.

Article 21

The church assemblies attend to affairs from an ecclesiastical perspective, in the light of the Word of God and in an ecclesiastical manner.

Article 22

- 22.1 More numerous assemblies deal only with matters that belong there, or which have been referred by less numerous assemblies and which could not be concluded by the smaller assemblies.
- 22.2 A more numerous Assembly can act where a church council or presbytery does not exist anymore or is unable to constitute, under the following circumstances:
- 22.2.1 where a less numerous Assembly is non-existent
- 22.2.2 in the event of incapability or mismanagement in the less numerous Assembly.

Article 23

Church appeal, gravamen (objection) and review (revision)

- 23.1 The resolutions of assemblies or their authorised committees are binding, in as far as these are not in conflict with the Word of God, the confession of the church and the Church Order (Vide Article 1 and 2)
- 23.2 All officers and members of the church are called upon to constantly evaluate the work of assemblies and officers in the light of the Word of God, the doctrinal standards and the Church Order as yardstick
- 23.3 Resolutions of Church Councils, presbyteries and synods can, by means of an appeal or application for review (revision) revisited in accordance with the prescriptions of the Regulation
- 23.4 In the case of a resolution of General Synod, a procedural objection, letter of objection on doctrine / ethical grounds (gravamen) or application for review (revision) may be lodged with the General Synod.
- 23.5 Anyone who appeals, lodging an objection (gravamen / letter of objection) or makes an application for review (revision) does so in accordance with the regulation approved by General Synod for the procedure.
- 23.6 Members, office bearers and officials of the Dutch Reformed Church may not seek redress in the civil courts against decisions of a church assembly(ies), until they have used and exhausted the ecclesiastical means available to them.

Article 24

The order of business of every assembly begins each day with Scripture reading and prayer and ends with thanksgiving.

Article 25

Every assembly must have a chairperson responsible for its guidance and orderly conduct, and a secretary who minutes the acts of the assembly.

3.2 Specific stipulations

3.2.1 Church Council

Article 26

- 26.1 Every congregation has a church council, entrusted with the supervision, governing and discipline of the congregation.

26.2 The church council consists of the ministers of the Word as well as the elders and deacons who were elected as members of church council.

Article 27

27.1 A church council may decentralise and delegate to decentralised church councils clearly prescribed powers which are submitted to the presbytery for approval.

27.2 To deal with the specific affairs entailed in the different offices, elders and deacons may meet separately on a regular basis.

Article 28

28.1 The church council meets at least four times a year. In extraordinary circumstances, and with the permission of the presbytery, a church council may meet on less occasions

28.2 The church council annually elects a chairperson from among the minister(s) and elders.

28.3 Extraordinary meetings of the church council are convened by the chairperson after consultation with the minister(s) if the chairperson is not a minister of the congregation.

28.4 If the local minister(s) cannot attend an ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the church council, the substitute minister or another minister approved by the presbytery (active or emeritus) appointed thereto by the presbytery as its proxy, must attend the meeting in an advisory capacity with report to the presbytery. At the request of the church council this person may also act as chairperson.

3.2.2 Presbytery

Article 29

As an expression of the church's interrelation and with a view to proper church discipline, congregations are grouped together in presbyteries. The grouping of congregations is done from time to time by synod. The presbytery meets once a year or as determined by the relevant synod.

Article 30

30.1 The presbytery is composed of one minister and one elder/deacon as delegates of the church council of every congregation within the presbytery. Where there is a vacancy for a minister, an elder or deacon may be delegated for the vacant post.

30.2 If a congregation has more than one post for a minister, the church council is entitled to delegate another elder/deacon for each additional post, if the synod so resolves. Where there is a vacancy for a minister in such a congregation, church council may delegate an elder or deacon for the vacant post.

30.3 For each delegate an alternate is appointed. An elder/deacon may serve as an alternate for a minister.

30.4 All delegates must be provided with credentials.

Article 31

The business of the presbytery comprises of:

- 31.1 Church visitation
- 31.2 the supervision of the congregations, to see to it that church councils and congregations fulfil their vocation
- 31.3 advice and help to church councils
- 31.4 the establishment of new congregations or dissolution of congregations at the request of church councils and the determination of congregation boundaries
- 31.5 attending to matters presented to the presbytery meeting either in the first instance, or by way of appeal
- 31.6 the management of the shared calling and joint work of the congregations in the presbytery as determined by the presbytery from time to time
- 31.7 the supervision and/or discipline of all elders, deacons, ministers of the Word, auxiliary - and local ministers, including retired ministers and ministry candidates, without excluding the supervision of the church council of its office-bearers (see Art 62.2 of the *Church Order*).

3.2.3 Synod

Article 32

The synod is constituted by the delegates of congregations which form a geographical unit and can meet with ease. The consistence may be changed by General Synod/ the Moderamen of General Synod upon request and with approval by the relevant Synod(s)/ Synod Commission(s).

Article 33

- 33.1 Each synod itself decides in which of the following ways it constitutes its assemblies:
 - 33.1.1 one minister and one church council member (elder/deacon) delegated by the council of each congregation in the synodical resort. Where there is a vacancy for a minister, an elder or deacon may be delegated for the vacant post; or
 - 33.1.2 if a congregation has more than one position for a minister of the Word, the church council has the right to one more church council member (elder / deacon) for every additional minister, should the synod so resolve. Where in such congregation the position of minister of the Word is vacant, the church council may delegate a church council member (elder / deacon) in the vacancy; or
 - 33.1.3 An equal number of ministers and elders/deacons from each presbytery in the synod. The synod decides on the manner of delegation and the number of delegates per presbytery.
- 33.2 The theological training is represented in an advisory capacity by one member of the faculty of the Theological Faculty Stellenbosch and/or the Theological Faculty Pretoria and/or the Theological Faculty Bloemfontein.
- 33.3 For each delegate an alternate is appointed. A church council member (elder / deacon) may be an alternate for a minister.

33.4 Delegates should be provided with credentials.

Article 34

Synod meets at least once every four years, if possible, in the year following the ordinary meeting of General Synod.

Article 35

The mandate and competence of the synod comprise:

- 35.1 composing and amending of rules and regulations for the activities entrusted to it, provided these are not contrary to the *Church Order*
- 35.2 the management of the common calling and joint ministry of the congregations in its area, subject to Article 22 and therefore also Article 26, 31 and 43 of the *Church Order*. The nature and scope of these matters are determined by synod itself
- 35.3 the training of ministers of the Word as prescribed by Article 6 of the *Church Order*
- 35.4 the accumulation of the necessary funds for its own activities and the financing of General Synod according to an agreed formula.
- 35.5 deliberating all matters presented to it either in the first instance or by way of appeal.
- 35.6 the appointment of delegates to General Synod, and
- 35.7 accepting of other doctrinal standards in the stipulations of the synod with the provision that:
 - 35.7.1 General Synod has determined beforehand that such a doctrinal standard is not in conflict with the Word, the Forms of Unity, and the adopted ecumenical confessions
 - 35.7.2 at least two thirds of a synod assembly were in favour if it
 - 35.7.3 at least two thirds of the church councils of the synod were in favour to this after securing the necessary approbation.
 - 35.7.4 it transpired without coercion from members, officials, and other church assemblies within the synod resort, and
 - 35.7.5 it is not deemed to constitute an amendment of the DR Church's shared doctrinal standards

Article 36

The constituent churches or synods maintain full jurisdiction over their properties, finances, activities, etc, which they had before becoming a constituent of General Synod, or procured afterwards, except those transferred in accordance with the *Church Order* or will be transferred to General Synod, or which is held in trust by General Synod.

Article 37

The constituent churches are free to withdraw with the retention of all rights, privileges, properties, name, etc, from General Synod if they can justify this step before God in the light of his Word.

3.2.4 General Synod

Article 38

Structure and frequency of meetings

- 38.1 General Synod meets every four years.
- 38.2 The assembly of the General Synod consists of a maximum of 370 delegates consisting, if possible, of an equal number of ministers and elders/deacons.
- 38.3 200 delegates comprising 20 persons per constituent synod, of which half should preferably be younger than 40 years of age.
- 38.4 160 delegates are appointed proportional to the number of confessing members of each constituent synod
- 38.5 The General Governing Body for Theological Training appoints 10 delegates from the five training centres, with full voting rights. These delegates are additional to the number of delegates from the synods in question.
- 38.6 Diversity with regards to gender and age is considered in the composition of delegations.
- 38.4 Each delegation must be provided with credentials.

Article 39

The executive committee of the General Synod General Synod, consisting of a moderator (chair), an assessor (vice-chair) and a registrar, leads the Synod (Vide Article 25 of the *Church Order*). The general secretary acts as the minuting secretary of the meeting, with advisory vote. The executive is supported by the moderators/chairpersons of the constituent synods.

Article 40

- 40.1 Before the adjournment of General Synod an executive committee is elected by the General Synod Moderamen for the duration of the following term.
- 40.2 Members of the executive committee may not be elected in the same position for more than one term.
- 40.3 The General Synod Moderamen (GSM) constitutes at the end of the General Synod meeting.

Article 41

The delegated minister with the longest service, who is the oldest in years, officiates at the opening of the assembly and presides until the moderator is elected. The general secretary assists with constituting the meeting and the election of the moderator.

Article 42

- 42.1 General Synod determines when the next General Synod will meet, provided that no more than 4 years may pass between meetings.
- 42.2 The General Synod Moderamen convenes an extraordinary General Synod meeting if deemed necessary, either on its own initiative, or at the request of one or more synods.

Article 43

- 43.1 The mandate and function of General Synod comprises:**

- 43.1.1 that which expresses the common identity of the denomination in terms of the Word, Confession, *Church Order*, calling and policy:
- 43.1.2 that which impacts the church's national and international ecumenical relationships
- 43.1.3 that which affects the public witness of the church nationally and internationally (*vide* article 67.4 of the Church order)
- 43.1.4 celebrating the common connectedness with one another, its unity and diversity
- 43.1.5 promoting synergies between constituent synods with regards to calling and witness
- 43.1.6 the designation of Bible translation(s) for official use
- 43.1.7 determining the confessions according to Art. 44, the *Church Order*, the liturgical forms and practices, the hymnal(s) and the liturgical guidelines for worship services
- 43.1.8 determining the formal requirements for the training of the ministers of the Word
- 43.1.9 the administration of immovable properties and funds of General Synod
- 43.1.10 oversight and maintaining a constructive working-relationship with the church companies, namely Bible-Media, CLF and Huguenot College
- 43.1.11 dealing with appeals brought before General Synod

43.2 The agenda of General Synod is determined by the matters in 43.1

- 43.2.1 The General Synod does not deal with matters that can be dealt with by the constituent synods or congregations
- 43.2.2 The agenda of the General Synod is formed by matters referred to it by the constituent synods and that which arises from the work of the GSM, provided it does not overstep the mandate in 43.1
- 43.3 The General Synod mandates the GSM as proxy to execute the business, ministry priorities, decisions, and mandates of the General Synod in terms of the relevant regulations for the General Synod and GSM

Article 44

- 44.1 Amendment of the Confession is only possible after it has been approved with a two-thirds majority by each synod and two-thirds of all the church councils, each supporting it with a two-thirds majority.
- 44.2 Article 44.1 and 44.2 are amended after each synod individually has approved it with a two-thirds majority and General Synod thereafter approves it with a two-thirds majority.
- 44.3 General Synod may, exception for article 44.1 and 44.2 of the *Church Order*, amend or augment the *Church Order* with a two-thirds majority.
- 44.4 Matters concerning doctrinal discipline, doctrinal disputes or disputes between synods and less numerous assemblies may be brought before General Synod by way of appeal. In matters of doctrinal discipline and doctrinal disputes a two-thirds majority is required to confirm the verdict of General Synod (*vide* Article 65.2 of the *Church Order*).

44.5 Lacking a two-thirds majority, any of the parties may appeal to the individual synods. The accumulate absolute majority of votes of the individual synods is final.

Article 45

General Synod may, except for Article 44.1 and 44.2 of the Church Order, suspend, or grant relief (exemption) of articles of the Church Order, with a two-thirds majority.

Article 46

General Synod structures its activities as needed.

Article 47

General Synod may enact regulations in to facilitate the execution of Article 46 of the *Church Order*.

CHAPTER 4

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

4.1 Public Worship

Article 48

48.1 The worship service is, under the gracious efficacy of the Holy Spirit, the official public gathering of the congregation into a meeting with God and the as communion of the saints, under the guidance of the particular offices and by the ministry of the Word, the ministry of the holy sacraments, prayer, hymns and offerings.

48.2 The form of the worship service is determined by the church council utilising the liturgical guidelines as determined by General Synod.

48.3 The leading of worship services is the responsibility of one of the following persons:

48.3.1 the minister of the Word of the local congregation, or in his/her absence,

48.3.2 the substitute minister,

48.3.3 another competent minister of the Word (*vide* Regulation 12, Regulation for the Competency of Ministers of the Word, Candidate ministers and Emeriti) of reformed confession invited by the church council,

48.3.4 a student of a theological faculty of the Dutch Reformed Church (cf. article 6.2 of the *Church Order*) who, either in accordance with the requirements of the relevant governance body, and with the permission of the church council, and as part of his/her practical training in the congregation, or after completion of the practicum, is invited by a church council;

48.3.5 an elder/deacon who was granted preaching competency by the church council and presbytery (cf. Article 4, 10 and 16.1.8, 17.1.5 and decision 13 of the *Church Order*)²²

48.4 Preaching

48.4.1 with the aim of proclaiming of the whole council of God, the preaching must do full justice to the church year and the Confessions,

and

48.4.2 the content of the preaching must always be an exposition and application of Holy Scripture.

48.5 The Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt must continually be presented systematically in the preaching.

4.2 Sacraments

Article 49

49.1 Baptism

Holy baptism is administered by a minister of the Word with water and using an approved liturgical form. It is administered, except in exceptional circumstances, during an official public congregating of the congregation.

49.2 Communion

49.2.1 Holy Communion is celebrated at least four times a year in every congregation

49.2.2 The following are admitted to holy communion:

49.2.2.1 professing members of the congregation

49.2.2.2 baptismal members of the congregation who have been admitted to holy communion by the church council

49.2.2.3 visitors from other Dutch Reformed congregations,²⁷

49.2.2.4 visitors from other churches²⁸

4.3 Youth Ministry

Article 50

50.1 The youth as an integral part of the congregation is the responsibility of the Church and this responsibility is inalienable and intransmissible,

50.2 The ministry to the youth as covenant youth is an integral part of the comprehensive ministry of the congregation by which God is manifested through his Word to the youth by proclamation, teaching, equipping, pastoral care and service. This ministry of the congregation is performed under the guidance of the offices, and by the youth.

50.3 The children of the congregation, as well as all persons outside the Church who wish to become professing members of the congregation, must be instructed in the Word of God and the doctrine of the Church. This instruction with the aim of public profession of faith through which they share in the full rights and responsibilities of communicant members.

50.4 Where the extent of the work and other circumstances requires, it is undertaken jointly within the denomination.

4.4 Pastoral Care

Article 51

51.1 The ministers of the Word, elders and deacons must extend pastoral care to all members of the congregation through faithful care, particularly of the needy, the sick and the elderly. They must be visited, encouraged, comforted,

and supported. Members must continually be warned against false teachings and heresies, against worldliness and godless practices.

51.2 The Christian marriage as an institution of God must be kept holy, church councils must care for this through the necessary pastoral oversight.

51.3 Church councils ensure that deceased members of the congregation receive a Christian burial/cremation.

4.5 Congregational Ministry

Article 52

52.1 The Church directs itself through congregational ministry to the members to build up the congregation to fulfil its ministry.

52.2 The Church directs itself by intensive, specialised, congregational ministry to those alienated from the church yet are still formal members, in order to reach them in a meaningful way and lead them back into communion with Christ.

52.3 Where the extent of the work and other circumstances requires, it is undertaken jointly by the denomination.

4.6 Mission (*Missio Dei*)

Article 53

53.1 The mission of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is to grant life and fulness to the world, and the church is in the service of God's mission.

53.2 Through the Word and Spirit, God gathers to Himself a congregation. Through this congregation

- * He causes his Word to be proclaimed,

- * He constitutes communion of the saints out of all nations

- * He causes ministry to the world in need,

- * He causes his command to protect the creation and life to be visibly expressed, and

- * His justice and reconciliation are proclaimed.

Thus, He causes his kingdom to come.

53.2 The missional church ministers the gospel in all its dimensions to people who are ignorant of the gospel or alienated from it.

53.3 Every congregation is a missional congregation and every member of the congregation a missionary.

4.7 Ministry of Caring

Article 54

54.1 The Church must care for the poor and others in need with a priestly concern, by providing help to those in need, by comforting them and spiritual upliftment.

54.2 Where the extent and other circumstances of the work require it, congregations perform the ministry of benevolence through the denomination.

4.8 Ministry of the faithful

Article 55

55.1 The calling of the church and its mission to the world (*Missio Dei*) implies the dedicated ministry of every member

55.2 Every believer receives from gifts, opportunities from the Lord, and the power of his Spirit in daily life to demonstrate God's love for the world.

55.3 In view of this, the church should equip, inspire, and support the believers.

55.4 The church creates opportunities where the believers can be involved in building the church and propagate the Kingdom of God.

55.5 Believers are free, for the sake of their ministry in the world, to initiate actions and form networks and partnerships to foster the kingdom.

55.6 The church grants with prudence its blessing and cooperation to such activities, networks or partnerships which stand in the service of the *Missio Dei*.

4.9 Doctrine and Current Affairs

Article 56

The Church endeavours to promote Scriptural perspectives on current affairs, doctrinal and ethical issues and strives to promote a morally sound society.

4.10 Stewardship

Article 57

Each church assembly makes the necessary provision for the thorough control of the material affairs of the Church and reports annually on its stewardship to the congregation, presbytery, synod or General Synod, as the case may be.

4.11 Labour relations

Article 58

Conditions of service for employees, other than ministers, employed by a church council or other assembly, are set out in a contract.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE

Article 59

Purpose and provisions

59.1 Church supervision and church discipline are exercised:

59.1.1 to the glory of God,

59.1.2 for the welfare of the Church,

59.1.3 for the salvation of the sinner,

59.2 as prescribed by

59.2.1 the Word of God,

59.2.2 the Confessions,

59.2.3 the *Church Order* and other regulations of the Church,

59.2.4 the service agreement.

Article 60

Church supervision and discipline

- 60.1 Church supervision and discipline has a spiritual character as is fitting for the church being a faith- and love-based fellowship. Supervision and discipline are therefore conducted in an ecclesiastical manner and by spiritual means.
- 60.2 The official exercise of discipline by church assemblies or those authorised by them, does not replace the vocation of the faithful to admonish one another, but supplements it.
- 60.3 The official supervision and discipline of the church is pastoral-canonical in nature and must be applied from a Biblical and spiritual perspective in a fair and just manner.
- 60.4 Church discipline is focused on the entire scope of life (doctrine and ethics) of all members (baptismal and professing) of the congregation, including its officers.

Article 61

Sins which are subject to discipline

- 61.1 Sins subject to discipline are those which contravene the Word of God and the Confession of the Church.
- 61.2 Sins that cause public offence or come to the attention of the Church in accordance with the prescriptions of Matthew 18:15-17, makes the offender(s) liable to an official disciplinary enquiry.
- 61.3 Misconduct in terms of labour relations by employees of the Church could also be sins subject to discipline.

Article 62

Members, church officers and employees

- 62.1 All baptismal and professing members of the congregation fall under the supervision and discipline of the church council.
- 62.2 All elders, deacons, minister of the Word, auxiliary ministers and Local ministers, emeriti and candidate ministers, are under the supervision and discipline of the presbytery, without excluding the supervision of the church council over its office-bearers (cf. Art. 31.7 of the *Church Order*).
- 62.3 Members of the church in the employ of a congregation or the denomination, can be disciplined for misconduct.

Article 63

Official Enquiry

- 63.1 Employees in the employ of a congregation or the denomination can, in terms of their conditions of service, be disciplined.
- 63.2 Church disciplinary action is the result of a transgression in the workplace and is in terms of the conditions of service.
- 63.3 Employees of the denomination, fall under the supervision and discipline of the employer

63.4 Ministers of the Word, auxiliary ministers and Local ministers, emeriti and candidate ministers in the employ of a congregation, are under the supervision and discipline of the presbytery.

Article 64

Disciplinary measures

64.1 The following measures for supervision and /or disciplinary measures may be applied by investigating bodies.

64.2 Baptismal Members

64.2.1 a reprimand in a private meeting or within the meeting of the investigating body

64.2.2 censure comprising the withholding of holy communion and/or refusal of the public confession of faith

64.2.3 excommunication from the congregation by means of the relevant form.

64.3 Confirmed Members

64.3.1 a reprimand in a private meeting or within the meeting of the investigating body

64.3.2 censure comprising the withholding of the sacraments and the suspension of other privileges of membership

64.3.3 excommunication from the congregation by means of the relevant form if censure and continued pastoral care have not led to repentance.

64.4 Elders and deacons

64.4.1 a reprimand in a private discourse or in the meeting of the investigating body

64.4.2 suspension with or without withholding of the sacraments and the suspension of membership privileges until true repentance is evident

64.4.3 dismissal from office with suspension of membership privileges and withholding of the sacraments.

64.5 Ministers of the Word, auxiliary ministers, local ministers, emeriti. Candidates and employees with report to the General Task Team Ministerial Matters in the case of licensed persons

64.5.1 a reprimand in a private meeting or in the meeting of the investigating body, or a written caution by the employer

64.5.2 suspension for a prescribed period with one or more of the following measures:

64.5.2.1 suspension of membership privileges

64.5.2.2 withholding of the sacraments

64.5.2.3 partial or total withholding of remuneration and allowances by the employer

- 64.5.3 If the investigating body is not convinced of the sincerity of remorse, the suspension may be extended.⁵
- 64.5.4 Dismissal from service in the congregation or of the denomination, with one or more of the following:
- 64.5.4.1 suspension of membership privileges for a set period and/or until remorse is demonstrated
- 64.5.4.2 withholding of the sacraments for a set period and/or until remorse is demonstrated.
- 64.5.4.3 notice to the General Task Team Ministerial Matters that the minister's right to practise is suspended for a given period,
- 64.5.4.3 notice to the General Task Team Ministerial Matters that the minister's right to practise should be terminated forthwith, which means the annulment of the Deed of Licence

Article 65 Appeals

- 65.1 In accordance with Article 23 of the *Church Order* an appeal may be lodged against the findings and disciplinary measures taken by bodies conducting church discipline.
- 65.2 In doctrinal cases (Vide Article 44.4 of the *Church Order*) and annulment of competence (Vide Article 7 of the *Church Order*) appeals may be lodged up to the General Synod.
- 65.3 In other oversight and disciplinary matters, appeals can be lodged only up to synod.

Article 66

- 66.1 Church disciplinary measures are aimed at contrition and repentance and are lifted taking Article 59.1 of the *Church Order* into consideration, in the case of:

66.2 Members

- 66.2.1 When a communicant member gives evidence of repentance after being censured, an investigating body or church council being convinced of the sincerity of the repentance, lifts the suspension.
- 66.2.2 Where the public profession of faith has been withheld, the church council admits the baptismal member to public profession if the body conducting the church discipline is convinced of the sincerity of the repentance.
- 66.2.3 When a member who has been excommunicated from the congregation gives evidence of repentance and desires to be received back into the congregation, the church council, if it is convinced of the sincerity of the repentance, receives the person back into the congregation by means of the relevant form.
- 66.2.4 In the case of baptismal members, this step can be accompanied by public profession of faith.

⁵ For the sake of the ministry in the congregation, the suspension must not continue indefinitely. Presbyteries must ensure that the ministry in the congregation does not suffer.

66.3 Elders and deacons

66.3.1 If the presbytery or its authorised commission as investigating body is convinced of the sincerity of the repentance, the suspension may be lifted

66.3.2 Elders and deacons who were dismissed, may be elected again to the church council.

66.4 Ministers of the Word

66.4.1 If the presbytery or its authorised commission/denomination as employer is convinced of the sincerity of the repentance, censure and suspension as disciplinary measures are lifted with report to the General Task Team for Ministerial Affairs.

66.4.2 In the case of dismissal in terms of Article 64.5.4 of the *Church Order*, the presbytery must lift the censure before the General Task Team for Ministerial Affairs restores the right to practise.

66.4.3 Restoration in service of the congregation/denomination may be effected only after a successful appeal, and only if the appeal body ordered it.

66.4.4 A licensee whose competence as a minister was terminated by a supervision and/or disciplinary action, can only be affected after *colloquium doctum* with an examination commission and on recommendation of the relevant GOVERNING BODY by the General Task Team Ministerial Affairs by a new licensing of the candidate.

66.4.5 In the case of loss of competence by a supervision and/or disciplinary action due to gross sins/misconduct such as adultery, immorality, divorce, murder, perjury, theft, or because of heresy, permission for licensing may be granted only in exceptional circumstances and after favourable recommendations have been received from all the relevant church assemblies, by the General Synod Moderamen on the recommendation of the General Task Team Ministerial Affairs.

CHAPTER 6

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH

6.1 Church and State

Article 67

67.1 In the light of Romans 13 the church recognises the state as a servant of God for our good. It is God who grants the state the mandate to maintain justice and to punish the malefactor.

67.2 The Church acknowledges that the government which controls a specific state by virtue of its physical rule is ordained by God and must be respected as such. The norm for the participation of the Church in the legal process and exercise of civil rights is the Word of God.

67.3 Christ is the Head of the Church. Therefore, the Church considers its right to freedom of religion, which includes its Biblical-prophetic witness to the state authorities and the world in which it is situated, as inalienable. In the exercise thereof it claims the protection of the government as determined in law.

67.4 The Church approaches authorities of state at all levels in an orderly manner. This liaison is conducted by its recognised church assemblies or the committees appointed by them for this purpose. Liaison on matters which affect the Church at the general synodical level is conducted by General Synod or its authorised proxy. Liaison without a specific mandate from General Synod is conducted by the General Synod Moderamen, with report to General Synod (vide Article 43.1.3 of the *Church Order* and the Footnote).

6.2 Church, Society, and free association

Article 68

Where possible, the Church gives support to societal, non-church organisations which have a positive Christian basis and are aimed at furthering the kingdom of God. This support is given from an ecclesiastical perspective and in an ecclesiastical manner. Whether a specific organisation may claim the support of the Church depends upon its principles and aims and how these are practiced in practical terms.

6.3 Church and education

Article 69

- 69.1 The Church endeavours to ensure that the Word of God and Protestant-Christian norms and values direct policy in educational institutions, as well as the cultural idiom in which education takes place.
- 69.2 The Church acknowledges the internal competence of educational institutions to decide on and finalise typically educational matters (standards, syllabi, etc.).
- 69.3 The Church endeavours to ensure Christian education for its children and youth. This education must include well-founded standards and syllabi.

6.4 Church and ecumenical relations

Article 70

- 70.1 The Church endeavours through its assemblies to co-operate with other Christian churches in a responsible manner, to deliver a joint message and to strive together for the maintenance of Christian principles.
- 70.2 General Synod determines the substance and scope of the relations with other churches or church communities by means of an ordinary majority vote. If a church or denomination applies with General Synod to enter into association with the church, approval is granted if it was carried by a two-thirds majority vote. The manner and scope of association is governed by the association agreement.
- 70.3 The degree and manner of co-operation are determined in each case by the degree of agreement regarding confession, church government, worship services and the view on the Christian way of life of the church or denomination in question.
- 70.4 The decision regarding application for or termination of membership of an ecumenical organisation is determined by a two-thirds majority vote of General Synod.

6.5 Interim order

Article 71

- 71.1 For any process of church re-unification within the Dutch Reformed Church Family or unification with other reformed churches in mind, the General Synod sets the arrangements for such cooperation and/or combination of activities.
- 71.2 Such arrangements are defined in *an interim order*, which is recorded after the approval by the General Synod in the church order book.
- 71.3 Where an *Interim order* is in conflict with the *Church Order* or where an *Interim order* does not provide for a particular matter, the *Church Order applies*.
- 71.4 Where an *interim order* is in conflict with the provisions and regulations of the constituent synods or where an *Interim order* does not provide for a particular matter, an *interim order may only* be used in a synod after the approval of the synod concerned has been obtained
- 71.5 An *Interim order* is not decisive or binding for the form and content of a new *Church order* of which may later become a unified church.
- 71.6 An *interim order* is compiled jointly and must be approved by the authorized representatives of all the churches concerned in the process of association, or of reunification with the Dutch Reformed Church.
- 71.7 An *interim order* will only be applicable where two or more legal entities of different denominations agree to it.

Article 72

- 72.1 With any process of ecclesiastical cooperation and/or church unification with other reformed churches, the General Synod sets the arrangements for such cooperation and/or combination of activities.
- 72.2 Such arrangements are defined in a *Collaboration Order*, which is included after approval of the General Synod in the church order book.
- 72.3 Where a *Collaboration Order* is in conflict with the *Church Order*, or where a *Collaboration Order* does not provide for a particular matter, the *Church Order applies*.

REGULATIONS

FUNCTIONING OF GENERAL SYNOD REGULATION 1

REGULATIONS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

This Regulation should be read in conjunction of Article 43 of the *Church Order* as well as Regulation 2 for the General Synod Moderamen (GSM)

1. NAME

The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church.

2. NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

- 2.1 The assembly of the General Synod is a celebration of the unity and identity of the DR Church.
- 2.2 The assembly of the General Synod deals with the agenda with a process of spiritual discernment.
- 2.3 The General Synod motivates and supports the synods in answering their calling.
- 2.4 The General Synod is not a prescriptive assembly.
- 2.5 The General Synod deals only with matters which are on the terrain of the General Synod as defined in Article 43.
- 2.6 In the interim between ordinary assemblies of the General Synod, the General Synod Moderamen (GSM) functions as a mandated working meeting where operational and functional matters of the General Synod in terms of the prescribed mandate (see Regulation for die GSM) are dealt with.
- 2.7 The General Synod and its task teams do research and practices inclusive consultative discussions and collective reflection, to aid synods and congregations in formulating their own policies.
- 2.8 The General Synod and task teams serve in an advisory manner for the constituting synods in matters pertaining to specific matters of policy such as to church order matters, matters with regards to ministers and labour law matters.

3. COMPOSITION AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 3.1 The General Synod meets every four years.
- 3.2 The assembly of the General Synod consists of a maximum of 370 delegates composed, as far as possible, of an equal number of ministers and church council members.
 - 3.2.1 Two hundred delegates consisting of twenty persons per constituent synod of which half of the delegates should preferably be younger than 40 years of age.
 - 3.2.2 One hundred and sixty delegates are appointed proportionally according the number of confessing members of each constituent synod/church.
 - 3.2.3 The General Governing body appoints ten delegates from the five training centres to wit, the three theological faculties of the Universities of Stellenbosch, Bloemfontein and Pretoria, **Huguenot** College, as well as the Namibian Evangelical Theological Seminary. These delegates have full participation rights.
 - 3.2.4 Synods are encouraged to consider diversity with regard to gender and age when appointing delegations.

4. COMPILING OF THE AGENDA

- 4.1 The agenda is compiled from within the constituting synods, the GSM and the permanent task teams of the General Synod.

- 4.2 Every assembly of the General Synod is preceded by a process of consultation with the constituting synods and the task teams of General Synod to gather submissions and motions to form the agenda.
- 4.3 The GSM sets the agenda by a process of spiritual discernment with the submissions and motions submitted by the constituting synods and the task teams of the General Synod.
- 4.4 The agenda deals only with matters which fall within the framework of Article 43 of the Church Order.

5. FUNCTIONING

5.1 Manner of meeting

5.1.1 Meetings are structured to ensure maximal participation and interaction of the delegates.

5.1.2 Meetings are conducted in a manner which carries the character of spiritual discernment, seeking consensus. This process could evolve in the following manner:

5.1.2.1 Processes of spiritual discernment during the meeting under the guidance of the Spirit listening to the Word, one another, and to other voices.

5.1.2.2 Focussed processes whereby the input may be either formal or is solicited from within the meeting.

5.1.2.3 Deliberation on the work of task teams of the GSM.

5.1.3 Voting is only done when it is deemed an absolutely necessity, and when the assembly so determined.

5.2 Determining of focus areas

5.2.1 The assembly determines priorities of calling for the church which must be dealt with during the recess by the GSM and task teams.

5.2.2 The GSM deals with the priorities of calling in a spiritual discerning manner and determines the focus areas for the following term.

5.2.3 The General Synod only delegate matters which fall within the ambit of Article 43 of the Church Order.

5.3 Decisions

5.3.1 Decisions are made by means of the process of spiritual discernment, inclusive and consultative processes with consensus in mind (*vide* Regulation 4, Rules of Order, point 5).

5.3.2 The General Synod in assembly has a mandate to decide on matters:

5.3.2.1 Of common cause with regard to calling, confession, public witness, theological training, ecumenical relations, church order (*vide* Article 43 van die Church Order); and

5.3.2.2 Own business matters not delegated to the GSM.

5.3.2.3 The assembly only votes on a motion when it is unavoidable, and when the assembly so determined.

REGULATION 2: REGULATION FOR THE MODERAMEN OF GENERAL SYNOD

(GSM)

1. NAME: GENERAL SYNOD MODERAMEN (GSM)

2. COMPOSITION AND VACANCIES

The GSM is composed as follows:

2.1 Voting members:

Five delegates of each constituent synod which includes the executive.

2.1.1 Each synod determines the manner in which they constitute their delegation.

2.1.2 Synods do not have to constitute their delegation only of persons who were delegated to the assembly of the General Synod.

2.1.3 Synods are urged to consider diversity in the constituting of the GSM. This includes inter alia that non ordained church council members, women, and young leaders be considered.

2.2 Advisory members

2.2.1 General Task Team Doctrine and Current affairs

2.2.2. General Governing Body

2.2.3 General Task Team Legal Matters

2.2.4 Ecumenical affairs

2.2.5 Public Witness

2.2.6 Missional Witness

2.2.7 General Task Team Funds and Assets

2.3 Advisory members

2.3.1 The General Secretary, General Manager and Minister in Synodical Service Research

2.3.2 Chairpersons of other Task Teams or the General Synod when the particular Task Teams have a submission

2.3.3 Chairpersons of ad hoc Task Teams dealing with the focusses of the GSM

2.3.4 Chairpersons or representatives of boards of the ecclesiastical companies when their submission is dealt with

3. CONSTITUTING THE ASSEMBLY

3.1 The GSM constitutes at the end of the General Synod assembly under leadership of the general secretary

3.2 At this meeting the chair, vice-chair and registrar (on advice of the General Task Team Legal Matters) is elected.

- 3.3 These members and the general secretary deal all matters on behalf of the General Synod until the GSM meets for the first time.
- 3.4 The GSM meets within one month after the ordinary assembly of the General Synod.
- 3.5 The additional members of the executive of the GSM is elected during the first meeting of the GSM.
- 3.6 The GSM constitutes every meeting with the members delegated by the synods. This name list must be handed in with the general secretary fourteen days before each meeting.

4. EXECUTIVE

- 4.1 The GSM appoints an executive consisting of seven members: a chair, vice chair, registrar, three additional members and the General Secretary.
- 4.2 The meeting is urged to consider diversity in constituting the executive.
- 4.3 The executive serves to the end of the next ordinary assembly of the General Synod.
- 4.4 Members of the Executive cannot be elected to the same position. (Members of the Executive are eligible in the same position if elected in the second half of the four-year cycle of the GSM to the executive.)
- 4.5 The executive acts as interim body between GSM meetings and deals with urgent matters for which there is no task team.
- 4.6 The minutes of the GSM are adopted by the executive.

5. THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE GSM

- 5.1 The GSM functions in the term between ordinary assemblies of the General Synod as an authorised executing meeting tasked with the operational and business matters of the General Synod
- 5.2 The GSM is an assembly that deals with all matters by means of spiritual discernment.
- 5.3 The GSM functions as a listening meeting where the stories of the constituting synods on their road to fulfilling their calling are shared.
- 5.4 The GSM functions as a working meeting where the leadership of the synods and chairpersons of task teams meet to continue the work on the terrain of the General Synods.
- 5.5 The GSM motivates and supports the synods to persist in their calling as discerned by each.
- 5.6 The GSM determines strategic focus areas to serve the priorities in terms of the calling of the General Synod.
- 5.7 Task teams are appointed to service these focusses.
- 5.8 The GSM may determine new focus areas after consulting with the leadership (moderamenta / service boards) of constituting synods.
- 5.9 The GSM serves as a place of coordination, synchronising and reporting with regards to the work of the task teams.

- 5.10 The GSM is responsible for managing the operational matters (staff, funds and assets, investments, infrastructure, communication) of the General Synod.
- 5.11 In dealing with contentious or potentially divisive matters the meeting may decide to follow the following process:
 - 5.11.1 The delegates of constituting synods consult separately during the meeting with feed back to the meeting and/or
 - 5.11.2 the matter is referred to the leadership (moderamen/service boards) of constituting synods for consultation and advice to the next meeting.
- 5.12 The secretariat is dealt with by the office of the General Secretary. The GSM may appoint a minuting secretary.
- 5.13 The GSM determines the frequency of meetings but meet at least once a year.

6. TASK TEAMS OF THE GSM

- 6.1 Task teams
 - 6.1.1 functions in terms of their prescribed mandate and the relevant regulations and tasks delegated by the GSM,
 - 6.1.2 functions as spaces where matters are dealt with by spiritual discernment,
 - 6.1.3 develop knowledge that will benefit the church; and
 - 6.1.4 is not prescriptive, but advisory and supportive with regards to the constituting synods and other church assemblies.
- 6.2 The GSM prioritises and appoints task teams to execute the task of the General Synod as defined in Article 43 of the Church Order.
- 6.3 The GSM appoints task teams to execute the support services to the General Synod, for example:
 - 6.3.1 Research
 - 6.3.2 General Task Team Funds and Assets
 - 6.3.3 Operational team
 - 6.3.4 Archive
 - 6.3.5 Ministerial Matters
 - 6.3.6 Communication
 - 6.3.7 Coordination
 - 6.3.8 An independent soundboard function
- 6.4 The GSM appoints ad hoc task teams to serve the focus areas determined by the GSM and specific tasks of the General Synod,
- 6.5 The GSM described the task, lifespan and manner or reporting of the task teams.
- 6.6 Task teams must submit an annual budget in consultation with the General Manager,
- 6.7 Task teams report to the GSM.

7. CONSTITUTION OF TASK TEAMS

- 7.1 At the constituting meeting of the GSM a temporary task team for task teams is delegated to serve the GSM with a report.

- 7.2 Task teams of the GSM is constituted by specialists in consultation with the constituting synods.
- 7.3 The GSM determines whether a Task team is constituted with synods represented or not.
- 7.4 Task teams may co-opt specialist members in consultation with the GSM and the operational team (for budget considerations)
- 7.5 The General Manager coordinates the work of task teams in pursuit of integration and strategic alignment with the service priorities of the General Synod and the focusses of the GSM.
- 7.6 Vacancies in the task team are filled by the GSM on recommendation of the task team concerned.
- 7.7 Due to possible clashes in interests a MIS/synodical official may not chair any task team to which he/she reports.

REGULATION 3

REGULATION FOR THE GENERAL SYNOD OPERATIONAL TEAM

1. NAME

General Synod Operational Team (GSO)

2. COMPOSITION

2.1 The Operational Team is constituted by the General Synod Moderamen (GSM) and consists of:

2.1.1 the General Secretary,

2.1.2 the General Manager,

2.1.3 two members of the GTFA-members with one secundus each,

2.1.4 one member of the Sub-task team for Labour Relations with a secundus; and

2.1.5 one member of the GTTL with a secundus

2.2 The Management Team may co-opt expert members as needed.

2.3 The office of the General Synod is the secretariate of the Operational Team.

2.4 The General Secretary is ex officio chairperson of the Operational Team.

2.5 Vacancies are filled on recommendation by the GSM.

3. TASK / MANDATE

The Operational Team's task is:

3.1 the execution of the tasks/mandate of the General Synod and the GSM,

3.2 the operational management and co-ordination of the operational and support services (administration, funds and assets, law, labour relations, and communication) of the General Synod,

3.3 providing support of the day-to-day business to task teams of the General Synod,

- 3.4 co-ordination of the work of support services,
- 3.5 provision of an office for the work of the General Synod,
- 3.6 formulating policy for the General Synod's business support system,
- 3.7 finalising of the budget for the work of the General Synod in conjunction with the Task Team Fund and Assets,
- 3.8 appointing a Sub-task team for Labour Relations (LRTT),
 - 3.8.1 The LRTT consists of four experts and the General Manager (ex officio).
 - 3.8.2 The regulations for the work and mandate of the Sub-task team for Labour Relations is drawn up by the Operational Team.
- 3.9 approval, storing, updating, and filing of labour policy, service agreements and staff records on recommendation of the sub-task team for labour relations,
- 3.10 appointments of junior staff in the office of the General Synod or van die General Synod in terms of the Personnel policy, after consulting with the Task Team Funds and Assets, and upon recommendation of the Sub Task Team for labour Relations,
- 3.11 the determining of the annual registration fees for licensed ministers aimed at the retention of competency; and
- 3.12 the appointment of a sub task team for properties which is tasked with the day-to-day management and maintenance of the properties, reporting to the Operational Team.

4. MEETINGS

- 4.1 The Operational Team meets at least once every quarter.
- 4.2 The Operational team functions without an executive.