

PREFACE

Church Order 2011 appears officially during kingdom time! In the church year the focus in kingdom time is the work of the church. Being church in the world is the inclusive theme. This period is about the calling of the church to make the kingdom of God, which has come near (Mk 1:15), visible in our world. As reformed believers we profess that Jesus Christ is the King of his church (Art 3.2). Regulations of the church govern the life of the church, but the church is still ruled by Jesus Christ. The *profession* of the church is based on the teaching and life of Christ. The *offices* flow out of Christ's ministry in the world. The *assemblies* have an authority granted by Christ, exercised in his Name. The *work of the church* is focussed on the powerful growth and expansion of the kingdom of Christ. The *governance and discipline* is exercised and applied for the sake of the well-being of Christ's church. The *external relationships* wish to affirm, defend and promote the Lordship of Christ as far and wide as possible. The DR Church has made the choice to be a missionary church. In our mission to the world we invite all to acknowledge Jesus Christ as King of the world as we do.

The regulations of the church are collected in a church order book to serve as the *corpus iuris*, the systematised collection of ecclesiastical prescriptions and guidelines which bind and keep believers of the same denomination together. The church order can also be called the family rules of the same family of believers. In the Report of the Task Team for Restructuring which served before the General Synod in October 2011, the following answers are given as to the theological points of departure for the DR Church on the issue of denomination:

- We are people to whom the triune God *binds* himself by love; therefore we live as people who are *bound* to God, to each other, and to his world.
- We are part of the *household* of God and *fellow-travellers*; therefore we understand the church as both *structure and movement*.
- We are a reformed *church which continues to reform*; therefore we continuously seek *God's will* for our life around *Word* and profession.
- We are *called* by God *and sent*; therefore *we follow His example* in everything and doing so give life and sound to the love of God and his presence in the world.
- We form part of the *one body of Christ*; therefore we continue growing together despite being *different*. We need each other and *celebrate* our togetherness before God.
- We are a church which, by the grace of God, has come a long way together, therefore we don't want to let go of each other.

The careful and consistent application of the family rules serves the unity, sanctity, inclusivity and purity of the church. The application of the ecclesiastical regulations must protect the church against division, worldliness, exclusivity and error. The application of law in a faith fellowship must make believers healthy, whole and happy.

Thank you to every member of the General Task Team for Legal Affairs (ATR) and every other role player who enabled the final publication of the 2011 edition of the *Church Order Book* of the DR Church. A special word of thanks to rev. Helgard Janse van Rensburg, the hardworking and committed secretary of the ATR, for attending to the compilation and technical matters hereof.

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