20.5 VERSOEK KLASSIS GROTER JOHANNESBURG – STUDIEDEPUTATE VIR KERKORDE (Art 51)

20.5 REQUEST CLASSIS GREATER JOHANNESBURG – STUDY DEPUTIES CHURCH ORDER (Art 51)

A. Oudl PM de Klerk stel die Versoek.
Elder PM de Klerk tables the Request.

B. Die Versoek word staande die Sinode afgehandel.
The Request is concluded while the Synod is in session.

C. **Besluit:** Daar word nie gevolg gegee aan die versoek om Studiedeputate nie.
Klassis Groter Johannesburg word gewys op die besluite van Sinode 2018 (2018:557-558, 3.1 en 3.2).
Aangesien Sinode 2018 nie Deputate aangewys het om 3.2 van die besluite van Sinode 2018 uit te voer nie, word Deputate aangewys om Sinode 2018:557-558, 3.2 uit te voer.
Decision: The request for Study Deputies is not granted.
Classis Greater Johannesburg is pointed to the decisions of Synod 2018 (2018:557-558, 3.1 and 3.2).
Since Synod 2018 did not appoint Deputies to implement 3.2 of the decisions of Synod 2018, Deputies are hereby appointed to implement Synod 2018:557-558, 3.2.

D. **VERSOEK / REQUEST**

Besluit van Klassis Groter Johannesburg	**Decision of Classis Greater Johannesburg**
By die afgelope vergadering van Klassis Groter Johannesburg op 10 September is besluit dat – "KGJ 'n brief rig aan die Algemene Sinode wat geskeduleer is om in 2023 te vergader om Studiedeputate te benoem ten opsigte van afwykings van die letterlike betekenis van die Kerkorde deur kerke in Suidelike Afrika, die korrekte verstaan van die Kerkorde as 'n orde en nie 'n wet nie, en die implikasies daarvan vir die gemeenakoord tussen die Gereformeerde Kerke van Suidelike Afrika."	At the recent meeting of Classis Greater Johannesburg on 10 September 2022 it was resolved that – "CGJ write a letter to request the General Synod that is scheduled to meet in 2023 to appoint study deputies regarding deviations from the literal meaning of the Church Order by churches in Southern Africa, the correct understanding of the Church Order as an order and not a law, and the implications of this for the common accord between the Reformed Churches of Southern Africa."
1. Voorbeelde van afwykings van die Kerkorde Dit is bekend dat kerke in die GKSA van verskillende taal en kultuurgroepe reg deur die land bepaalde artikels van die Kerkorde verskillend toepas. Voorbeelde daarvan is –	**1. Examples of deviations from the Church Order** It is known that churches of the GKSA of different language and cultural groups throughout the country apply the church order in different ways. Examples hereof are –
1.1 *Wie mag die Woord en Sakramente bedien?* Kragtens Art 3 van die KO sal dit vir niemand geoorloof wees om die diens van die Woord en Sakramente uit te oefen tensy hy wettig daartoe beroep en toegelaat is nie. Die wettige beroeping van 'n persoon tot die diens van die Woord geskied kragtens Art 4 en 8 KO. Dit gebeur in verskillende	1.1 *Who may minister the Word and who may administer the Sacraments?* In terms of Art 3 of the CO no person shall be permitted to proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments unless he has been lawfully called to do so and has been admitted to the office. The lawful calling of a person to minister the Word occurs in terms of Art 4 and Art 8 CO. It happens in various churches that

kerke dat persone anders as die wat kragtens Art 4 & 8 KO daartoe beroep is, maar wat deur die plaaslike Kerkraad daartoe toegelaat is, die Woord verkondig. Die letter van die KO word derhalwe nie toegepas nie, maar wel die beginsel nl. dat diegene wat die Woord van die Here suiwer verkondig, toegelaat word om in 'n erediens voor te gaan.	persons other than those who were called in terms of Art 4 & Art 8 CO, but who have been permitted to do so by the local Church Council, proclaim the Word. The letter of the CO is therefore not applied, but the principle is, namely that those who proclaim the Word purely, are permitted to lead a worship service.
1.2 *Liturgiese aspekte: Sing van Liedere en lees van Formuliere* Kragtens Art 69 KO mag slegs Liedere wat deur die Sinode goedgekeur is in die kerke gesing word. Dit is bekend dat daar in verskillende kerke ander Skriftuurlike liedere as die wat deur die Sinode goedgekeur is, gesing word. Kragtens Art 58 en 62 KO moet die voorgeskrewe Formuliere by die bediening van die doop en nagmaal voorgelees word. Dit is bekend dat in verskillende kerke verkorte weergawes van die Formuliere gelees word.	1.2 *Lithurgical aspects: The singing of Hymns and reading of Forms* In terms of Art 69 CO only those Hymns of Praise that have been approved by the Synod are to be sung in churches. It is known that in various churches other Scriptural songs and in other languages than those that have been approved by the Synod, are sung. In terms of Art 58 and Art 62 CO the Forms prescribed for the administering of baptism and communion must be read. It is known that in various churches shortened versions of the Forms are read.
1.3 *Bediening deur huisbesoek of selgroepe* Die geestelike versorging van die gemeente met huisbesoek deur die ouderling in wyke word deur Art 23 KO voorgeskryf. In sommige gemeentes geskied die geestelike versorging van die gemeente deur middel van selgroepe en ook op ander maniere, in plaas van deur fisiese huisbesoek.	1.3 *Ministering by home visition or small groups* The spiritual care of the congregation by the elders in wards is prescribed by Art 23 CO. In some congregations the spiritual care of the congregation takes place in small groups and also in other ways rather than by home visitation.
1.4 *Voorsitterskap van Kerkraads-vergaderings* Kragtens Art 37 KO moet 'n bedienaar van die Woord die voorsitter by 'n Kerkraadsvergadering wees. In verskillende gemeentes gebeur dit dat ander geskikte persone as bedienaars van die Woord met die goedkeuring van 'n Kerkraad as voorsitter optree.	1.4 *The Chairmanship at meetings of the Church Council* In terms of Art 37 CO the minister of the Word must be the chairman of a church Council. In various congregations it happens that persons other than ministers of the Word serve as chairperson with the approval of the Church Council.
1.5 *Nie-nakoming van Sinodebesluite* Artikels 31, 33, 86 en 68 KO is hier van toepassing en word deur verskillende kerke verskillend toegepas. Bv. in verskillende kerke – - is daar vroue wat dien as ouderlinge;	1.5 *Non-adherence to decisions of Synod* Articles 31, 33, 86 and 68 CO apply here and are applied differently by various churches. E.g., in various churches – - There are women who serve as elders;

- die tweede diens vind nie plaas nie of word vir ander aspekte as die uitleg van die Heidelbergse Kategismus gebruik.
- die nie-nakoming van Sinodebesluite tov ramings, verpligte kollektes en ander sake word grootliks geïgnoreer – terwyl die nie-nakoming van Sinodebesluite oor die amptelike dienswerk van vroue deur sommiges as gronde vir "uitbanning" beskou word.

1.6 *Ander voorbeelde*

- Art 5 – Die status van die advies van 'n Klassis. Is die advies van 'n Klassis net 'n aanbeveling of is die plaaslike kerk verplig om die advies te volg? Sommige Kerkrade beroep predikante sonder advies van die Klassis of in stryd met die advies van 'n Klassis. Is so 'n predikant se beroeping dan nog geldig?
- Art 15 – Daar is baie predikante en emeriti wat (op versoek) "oral" rondpreek sonder die advies van die Klassis. Wat gebeur nou in die geval van hierdie oortreding van die Kerkorde? Niks nie? Terwyl die oortreding van ander artikels van die Kerkorde as verbreking van kerkverband beskou word.
- Art 21 – Skoolonderrig in die vrees van die Here. Sommige Kerkrade doen niks hieraan nie – terwyl ander hulle eie Gereformeerde skole stig en onderhou. Is hierdie artikel net 'n aanbeveling? Hoe moet hierdie artikel in 'n sekulêre samelewing onder 'n humanistiese grondwet nagekom word?
- Art 41 – Verskeie Kerkrade (ook in die verlede) het hulle by Klasses gevoeg wat nie (fisies) naburig is nie – maar wel (volgens hulle) geestelik naburig. Sulke onordelikheid word verdra?
- Art 44 – Is gereelde visitasie net 'n aanbeveling?
- Art 61 – Toelating tot die nagmaal slegs vir diegene van Gereformeerde belydenis (let op die hoofletter Gereformeerd). Baie

- The second service does not take place and is used for aspects other than the exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- The non-adherence to Synodal decisions with regard to levies, compulsory collections and other matters are largely ignored – whilst the non-adherence to Synodal decisions with regard to the official ministry of women is regarded by some as a basis for "expulsion".

1.6 Other examples

- Art 5 – The status of the advice of Classis. Is the advice of Classis only a recommendation or is a local church compelled to follow the advice? Some Church Councils call ministers without the advice of Classis or in conflict with the advice of a Classis. Is the calling of such a minister then valid?
- Art 15 – There are many ministers and emeriti who (on request) preach "everywhere" without the advice from the Classis. What happens in this instance of the transgression of the Church Order? Nothing? While the transgression of other articles of the Church Order is seen as a severance of ties with the denomination.
- Art 21 – Tuition at school in the fear of the Lord. Some Church Councils do nothing about this – whilst others establish and maintain their own Reformed schools. Is this article only a recommendation? How must this article be adhered to in a secular society under a humanistic constitution.
- Art 41 – Several Church Councils (also in the past) joined Classes who were not their physical neighbours – but their (according to them) spiritual neighbours. Such disorderly conduct is tolerated?
- Art 44 – Is regular visitation only a recommendation?
- Art 61 – Admission to communion only for those who confessed their belief in the "Reformed" faith (note the capital letter Reformed). Many congregations have a more relaxed approach and in

gemeentes het ‘n meer toeskietlike benadering en lees die artikel as gereformeerd (met ’n kleinletter).	this article read “reformed” with a small letter.
1.7 *Optrede by afwykings van Kerkorde* Wanneer daar van die letterlike betekenis van die KO afgewyk word, kom die volgende vrae aan die orde – 1. Moet dit as ‘n middelmatige of fundamentele saak beskou word – bv. die KO erken die middelmatigheid van sommige sake tov gebruike in buitelandse kerke. 2. Moet daar tussen die letterlike en prinsipiële aspekte van die KO onderskei word? 3. Indien die onderskeid tussen middelmatig/fundamenteel en letterlik/prinsipieel enige meriete het, hoe moet die kerkverband die afwykings hanteer? 4. En indien die kerkverband geoordeel het dat ‘n bepaalde kerk van die KO afwyk en die kerk ten spyte van die beoordeling met die afwyking volhou, wat staan die kerkverband te doen? 5. Mag ‘n kerk uit die kerkverband verwyder word vanweë die volgehoue afwyking van die KO, of is so ‘n standpunt onhoudbaar omdat die KO ‘n orde en nie ‘n wet is nie?	1.7 *Conduct with regard to deviations from Church Order* When there is a deviation from the literal meaning of the CO, the following questions come up for consideration – 1. Must it be considered as a non-essential or a fundamental matter – e.g. the CO acknowledges the non-essential nature of customs in foreign churches. 2. Must there be a distinction between literal and principle aspects of the CO? 3. If the distinction between essential / fundamental and literal/principle has any merit, how must the denomination deal with the deviations? 4. And if the denomination has judged that a particular church deviates from the CO and the church continues with the deviation despite the judgment, what must the denomination do? 5. May a church be removed from the denomination by reason of the continued deviation from the CO, or is such a view untenable because the CO is an order and not a law?
Versoek vir benoeming van Studie-deputate In die lig van die bg. voorbeelde en vrae versoek Klassis Groter Johannesburg dat die Algemene Sinode Studiedeputate aanstel om die gemelde vrae te beantwoord en aanbevelings daaroor te doen.	**Request for the nomination of Study Deputies** In view of the abovementioned examples and questions Classis Greater Johannesburg requests that the General Synod appoint Study deputies to answer these questions and make recommendations in regard thereto.