

COMMITTEE ON TRANSLATION AND REVISION OF
CONFESSIONAL AND LITURGICAL FORMS

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1980

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Liturgical Forms - Introductory Remarks

Mandate

Synod 1977, while giving with respect to the Creeds only mandate to provide a more modern translation, set some precedents as to how the Committee should understand its task re: the Liturgical Forms.

1. It adopted 'provisionally' a Form for the Ordination of Missionaries, which is a translation of the one adopted by the Dutch sister-churches, thus benefitting from what was done in the Netherlands.
2. It obviously took into account objections and/or wishes from the churches regarding some Liturgical Forms, like the one for the Holy Supper, and the Marriage Form. A revision of these Forms was considered desirable.
3. Thus, in its mandate, Synod 1977 mentioned revision in addition to the updating of the language, while reminding us of what had been accomplished in the Netherlands with respect to the Form for the Ordination of Missionaries. The Committee thankfully made use of this 'room' for revision, as will become clear from the first results of our work. The new Dutch Forms, published in Gereformeerd Kerkboek 1975, have been consulted extensively and profitably, though not slavishly, as especially appears from the Marriage Form.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

This Form was maintained in its present set-up. One will find that the sentences are shorter. Also, though no new texts were added in the Form, several references have been put in margin. This may serve two

purposes:

1. to indicate that every part is solidly founded in Scripture;
2. to promote the study of this (and the following) Forms.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

The same can be said of this Form. After some discussion pro & con a Preamble, it was decided to maintain it, be it then now as the translation of the new Dutch Preamble

N.B. Re: the addition of the Lord's Prayer to most of the Forms (and Prayers), the Committee left this unchanged in the Forms and Public Prayers. We propose that Synod decide to:

- either make the use by the officiating minister or elder optional
- or establish that this Prayer should be said in unison by the congregation.

FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH.

The Committee became convinced that for this occasion, so important for the candidates, for their parents, and for the whole congregation, we should have a short Form, and not just a list of questions with an opening and concluding clause. Elements of such a Form should be:

1. expression of our gratitude for the faithfulness of our Father,
Who brought our children this far;
2. evidence that profession of faith is Biblical;
3. a charge to the candidates to commit their lives to the Lord;
4. a prayer of thanksgiving.

N.B. To the first question was added, "and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with God's Word?"

We propose as names for the Forms for Excommunication and readmission

1. FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

2. FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION OF MEMBERS BY BAPTISM

Synod 1977 decided to add a "First Admonition" which will appear in the renovated Form.

3. FORM FOR RE-ADMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

These Forms will be submitted as soon as possible.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF MISSIONARIES.

Synod 1977 adopted, with minor changes, a translation of the newly adopted Form of the Dutch sister-churches.

This translation will be checked.

The Committee hopes to submit a revision of the Form for the Ordination of Ministers and the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons later on.

FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

This Form is a Translation and Revision of the new Dutch Form.

On behalf of the Committee

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Reporters on the Section of Forms.

