

Chapter 7

Summary and final conclusions

Guidelines for church singing in the beginning of the 21st century

Dit bring die dringendheid van die volgende vraag na vore: Hoe gaan die kerk die veelheid en veersoortige nuwe kerkliedere sinvol binne 'n gereformeerde opset hanteer?

(Kruger 2002:22)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Liturgical singing is essential

Gelineau (1978a:85) reflects on the question why churches and believers sing more than ever, in a culture where folk-singing is dead and answers that “[t]he ideal form of community participation in the celebration is singing”. In spite of all the differences on church music and singing, one can’t deny the important role and function of church music in the present-day church. The study so far has shown that liturgical singing had been part of the life and worship of the church from its earliest existence until today. In this regard Long (2001:17, cf. Van den Berg 2009:198) remarks: “...I remind myself that it is not the liturgical leader’s responsibility to make worship meaningful, because worship is in essence meaningful.” The empirical study has shown that all congregations (in the Presbytery of Potchefstroom-Moorivier) sing during their worship services. The church is still a singing church (cf. Olivier 1997:90). Singing is still an important part of the congregation’s worship service, and an integral part of their liturgy.

1.2 Liturgical singing is in a crisis

The study so far has shown that church music is in a crisis. In many ways, church music arrived at the crossroads. There had been many crossroads in the past. In a certain sense, church music has always been at the crossroads and will always be at the crossroads. It is argued here that church music can only exist and grow at the crossroads. Some liturgists, musicians and scholars feel that the church must just wait – the crisis will pass. Others feel that the church should return to an age where church music was more stable and certain.

Others want to embrace every new form and reject everything that is old or traditional. Others try to maintain a balance between old and new, traditional and contemporary. Reich (2003:773) observes that “[a]ufs Ganze gesehen hat aber das überlieferte Kirchenlied in Deutschland in den letzten 30 Jahren an Boden verloren”. Kruger (2007:17) rightly states that a serious rethinking of reformed church music is needed.

In rethinking church music, Long (2001:1-14) made an important contribution and identifies two forces that are driving the church, namely the *Hyppolytus force* and the *Willow Creek force* and argues that both of them both miss the mark in their pure forms. He summarizes the shortfalls of these forces as follows:

The Willow Creek approach puts too much distance between itself and the Christ-centered, historically informed, theologically shaped worship that constitutes the great tradition of Christian prayer and praise that is obedient to the Gospel [...] On the other hand, the Hyppolytus approach, unlike the Willow Creek approach, has often not taken sufficient account of the fact that we are in a new and challenging cultural environment and that worship must always be ready to adapt.

(Long 2001:9-11)

It is doubted whether anyone will ever find the solution to the dilemmas of church music and singing. At the end of this study, some proposals would be made in this regard. These proposals are not made from a musicological point of view – that was not the purpose of this study. In the literature study, as well as in the empirical study, the focus was on the worship service and the liturgy (as the service of the people) as point of departure. It was concluded that there is no biblical model or blueprint for church music. The worship service in this decade is an important meeting between the eternal God and His people living in the first part of the 21st century. As people living in this era, they (= Western people) are mainly postmodern people living in a secularized world. They worship God and experience God as postmodern Western people in the 21st century do. Although their types of spirituality differ, they experience God differently from the people that lived before them. Their calling is to live Christ-like lives in this era. Liturgy is their present-day service to God.

The question remains: what song should they sing? What music will be the “offer of praise” (Heb 13:15) that God desires? What song could articulate their faith as well as their lack of

faith; their experience of God as well as their lack of experience of God? Which song could at the same time articulate the age-old gospel, the Good News, as summarized in the faith and confessions of previous generations, as well as their contemporary culture and context-bound faith? This is the ultimate challenge of hymnology and church singing in the second decade of the 21st century. The challenge to hymnology is to be a servant to the *sung faith* as well as the *singing faith*; to be church for the traditional member as well as the foreign seeker. In short: how can one inculturate the age-old gospel and present an offer of praise that is worthy enough for the God of the ages, without denying the context of the people who sing the song?

1.3 Reactions to the crisis

There are numerous ways to react to the crisis in church singing. Niemandt (2007:37) observes: “Baiekeer is kerke se eerste reaksie op die nuwe wêreld om laer te trek [...] om nostalgies vas te klou aan die ou wêreld en steen en been te kla oor alles wat nuut en vreemd is. Die wêreld word as die vyand afgemaak en hulle verkies die veiligheid van die laer [...] Daar is eintlik nie lewe in laertrek nie, as dit te lank aanhou, bring dit die dood.”

There are three possible reactions to the crisis of church singing (cf. Barnard 1994:337-340):

- 1) Pretending nothing has happened or changed and doing business as always.
- 2) Embracing every new form, style or genre unconditionally, as if all new things are *per se* good and a ‘blessing’ to the church.
- 3) Critical openness, where the old and the new are continually evaluated and weighed. Barnard (1994:339) pleads for a combination between “aktuele tradisie en gereinigde hede”, thus taking the best from old and new. This is also the viewpoint of this study.

After observing the different forces within the church, Long (2001:11-12) suggests a third way where many congregations “had managed to remain firmly within the trajectory of historic Christian worship (the main contribution of the *Hyppolytus force*) and yet had fashioned worship that is genuinely responsive to the present cultural environment and is assessable, attractive, and hospitable to religious seekers and questers outside the church (the main goal of the *Willow Creek force*)”. The impression is that Long pleads for a form of blended worship which moves back and forth between traditional and contemporary, utilizing the best features and healthiest impulses of both forms of worship. Long (*ibid*) concludes that blended worship (as decided above) is not the answer to the current crisis regarding

church music, although many congregations have travelled this route.

2. A CREATIVE TENSION

The tension between the old and the new, the formal and informal, the age-old and the contemporary is as old as the church herself. Strydom (1991:118) mentions that the synod of Middelburg (1581) already made an exception by allowing the congregations in Overijssel to compose a collection containing “eenige der lichste psalmen dauids [...] ende daer by eenige oostersche vutgelesen gesangen, om alsoe de boeren aldaar te gewennen tot het gebruyck der psalmen dauids.”

The Psalter of Datheen contained the following (Strydom 1991:115):

- Psalms
- Canticles (songs from the Bible excluding the Psalms) of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon
- Apostolicum
- Ten Commandments
- Our Father prayer
- “Bedesang” of Utenhove
- Translation of Latin hymn (*Christe, qui lux es et dies* (*Christe, die du bist dach ende licht*)).

It is notable that that some free songs or more ‘contemporary’ songs were included in this Psalter. Wilson-Dickson (1992a:142) writes: “Montiverdi’s 1610 setting of music for Vespers is a spectacular example of the possibilities that can be explored by combining the older polychoral and contrapuntal musical styles with the ecstatic element of dance and the rhetoric of *stile rappresentativo*.” Wilson-Dickson (1992a:147) observes that in Hamburg (1642) the cantor had to “adhere to the modern, fashionable *stilo modulandi* [operatic style], so that congregations would be able to hear both the old and the new, and both tastes would be pleased” where ‘Old’ referred to the music of “fifty or more years before” and ‘new’ referred to the new kind of music in the operatic style.

Van Wyk (1985:25) summarizes the situation: “Tussen vernuwing en tradisie. So kan die spanningsveld waarin die kerklied leef, beskryf (word).” Van Wyk (*ibid*) sees this tension as a healthy tension which does not necessarily need to be solved. There is a need for older and newer songs. There is a second kind of tension: between aesthetics on the one side

and being singable by the congregation (folk-song) on the other. There is a third tension, and that could be described as the tension between Bible (objective truth) and culture (local story). It is argued that these tensions are vital and crucial for church singing and music.

3. INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY

The literature study illustrated that church singing had always been in a process of development. Through all ages new styles, genres and presentations were discovered. At least two lines of singing existed throughout history alongside one another, namely the **official song of the church and the song sung in everyday-life** where people were touched by God; often these two stood in tension with one another due to different reasons. In different eras these two lines grew closer to one another (eg. in Luther's ministry), and in other eras they grew further from one another (eg. The Middle Ages). This tension has often been the cause for the worship war that can still be seen in many congregations of the present-day DRC.

It was argued in the literature study that the official song of the church (DRC) mainly gives expression to the denominational (Reformed) spirituality of the DRC. Free songs are often utilized in giving expression to other types of spirituality within the DRC, like the more evangelical spirituality or the Scottish pietism. Free songs are also used to give expression to the spiritualities within a given DRC congregation, which is greatly influenced by the culture or sub-culture of the local congregation. The free song also gives expression to the ecumenical spirituality (referring to the universal body of Jesus Christ) of the DRC, whereby unity with the universal body of Christ is celebrated; songs from the hyper-culture are often used for this. The culture and sub-cultures within the DRC are greatly coloured by postmodernism and secularism. There is also evidence of a growing African influence and conscience due to the influence of the hyper-culture.

The free song has always fulfilled a crucial role and function alongside the official song of the church by giving expression to the cultures and spiritualities of a specific people. It is often closely related to the genres, styles, language and presentation of the local culture(s) and specific forms of spirituality. Kruger (2007:20) rightly says that "[d]ie seleksie van musiek vir godsdienstige doeleindes is nie 'n kwessie van reg en verkeerd (goed of sleg) nie, maar het eerder te make met kultuur en smaak. Die oogmerk behoort te wees om so ver moontlik liedere te gebruik wat as die beste beskou word in die kultuur waarbinne die

gemeente funksioneer”. The free song thus fulfills an important role in the local congregation, and is an important part of liturgical singing in the local congregation.

4. INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The Empirical study illustrated that the free song is used in all seven congregations of the presbytery of Potchefstroom-Moorivier. In different ways the free song is used within the different worship services of the seven congregations. The use of the free song includes the use of *kontrafaktes*, traditional hymns, contemporary songs, gospel songs as well as other songs. Free songs are often used to cross the borders of language, denominations and even races. Free songs are utilized in different kinds of worship services, including morning worship services in the main building, worship services at special occasions, evening worship services, youth worship services and children’s worship services.

The empirical study illustrated that free songs are often used within worship services aimed at more *heartfelt* types of spirituality, implying thereby that the official songs of the DRC do not always address the more *heartfelt*-people. Free songs are also utilized in all seven congregations within youth- and children oriented cultures, indicating the role of the free song in an inculturated worship service for youth and children. The latter indicates that the formal song of the church often fails (or is perceived to fail) in addressing this need. It was also evident in the empirical study that congregations are starting to compose their own (often primitive) songs in order to tell and celebrate their own local story or *kleinverhaal* with God. In a postmodern world the local story (*kleinverhaal*) becomes increasingly important.

The empirical study also illustrated how the different congregations try in various ways to inculturate their song, taking into consideration the various cultural backgrounds: socio-economic, education, age, phases of development, musical background and preference, *et cetera*. It was evident that some congregations experience a radical breach between different worship services, while others succeed in integrating different styles. The deliberate choice of some congregations not to sing the official song of the church in youth- and children’s worship services or evening worship services, was evident. The official church song is mainly used within the culture and spirituality of the morning worship service in the main church building - often perceived as an *intellectual* type of spirituality.

The empirical research indicated the growing tendency towards **contextual liturgy**.

Liturgical singing within contextual liturgy could be described as **contextual liturgical singing**, where selected songs from the official repertoire are combined with selected free songs in order to form a new repertoire of liturgical songs. The latter could be described as a **contextual liturgical song**. Through a process of bricolage songs from various traditions and genres are copied and merged in varying degrees into the contextual liturgy of the local congregation. Liturgical singing in the local congregations is thus increasingly contextual liturgical singing coloured by the culture and spirituality of the local congregation.

5. SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE STUDY AND EMPIRICAL STUDY

It is concluded that the free song has a vital role and function in expressing the spirituality or spiritualities of the local congregation (cultures). The selection of free songs as well as the combination thereof with the official song in a given congregation is closely related to the cultures and spiritualities within that congregation; the spiritualities within the local congregation are thus expressed by means of a unique combination of official song and free song. This unique combination of songs and the accompaniment thereof could be called **contextual liturgical singing**.

6. THE ROLE OF THE FREE SONG IN THE CURRENT CRISIS

This study has indicated that free songs have existed alongside the official church song from its earliest days. Already in the Old Testament, one can clearly observe the existence of different kinds of music and singing. The literature study as well as the empirical study emphasized the role of the free song within liturgical singing at present.

The local congregation still lives in the tension between the official church song on the one side, and the stream of informal or unofficial songs on the other side. Bosch (1996:351) describes this tension as a tension where form, content, presentation and “personele invulling” (the role of the music directors and musicians) challenge the congregation to sing a song that is true to God as well as to the congregation which sings it.

The whole worship service is a dialogue between God and man, *opus Dei* and *opus populi* (Barnard 1981:384-485). Therefore the local congregation (“de gemeente-ter-plaatse” - cf. Bosch 1996:352) is and remains the church that must constantly choose the song that is fit for their *latreia* and *leitourgia* to God. In that sense congregational singing must always be

inculturated singing, choosing the genre, style and presentation worthy enough for their *latreia* to God. The local *latreia* is greatly influenced by the context (cultures and spiritualities) of the local congregation, leading to a unique contextual song.

Church music is always influenced in two directions (cf. Bosch 1996:347). On the one hand church music must always be folk-song – the song of the people in their language, genre and style. On the other hand church music wants to offer its best, often leading to church music and singing as a form of art. This could be a healthy tension, guarding the church from a song that is either too simple or too splendid. These dangers threaten not only traditional church singing, but also new forms of contemporary liturgical singing and ultimately the free song. In this regard liturgical singing can thus be described as the best folk-song a given congregation can offer.

The tendency (in following Calvin) to rhyme all the psalms in the book of Psalms, could have great value. Unfortunately only a small percentage of these Psalms are really sung by congregations as illustrated by the study of Van Rooy (2008); therefore it often has less value. Kloppers (2002b:237) rightly observes that “[d]it is bekend dat psalms min en al minder in die Hervormde en NG Kerk gesing word”. Various reasons could be responsible for the latter; one of these could be that certain melodies are not singable and enjoyable within the cultures and spiritualities of the local congregations. The Psalter of Datheen (1650) serves as a good example (cf. Bosch 1996: 89-113). One must ask whether the form (text and musical genre) of the rhymed Psalms could really be described as folk-song in this era. It is postulated here that the genre of many of the rhymed Psalms are far remote from present-day folk-singing. It remains in doubt if it’s worthwhile to have all the Psalms in an official hymnal without being able to sing them (cf. Kloppers 2002b:236).

Kimball (2004) emphasizes the importance of a move towards emerging worship services, referring to a new form of worship emerging in the present day, just as new forms of worship had emerged in every time and culture in the Bible (cf. Abel, Noah, Abraham, and others). In the formulation of Müller (1990a:107): “Tussen erediens en wêreld moet daar ‘n wisselwerking plaasvind. Uit die landerye, uit die fabrieke, uit die strate, van oral oor moet almal kan instap in die erediens en kan tuis voel. En dan moet hulle weer uitstap uit die erediens, geïnspireer en toegerus vir die taak in die wêreld.” The latter can only happen if there is some continuity between the song (style, genre, accompaniment, *et cetera*) of the people (folk-singing) and the song (style, genre, accompaniment, *et cetera*) in liturgy.

Within the South-African context, future hymnals will have to contain more songs reflecting and addressing the context and challenges of the people of God living in South Africa in the 21st century. With regards to African churches, Dreyer (2005:794) observes that “[t]hey still sing mainly Western songs, with Western melodies, and consequently they do not sound like African people singing, but they do not sound like Westerners either...” The same tendency is observed within DRC congregations of the presbytery of Potchefstroom-Moorivier. With more and more congregations becoming multi-racial and multi-cultural (“multiculturalism and diversity” - cf. Dreyer 2005:794), the implications for church music will have to be thoroughly investigated. New forms and genres of songs true to the South African context need to be explored.

The repertoire of church singing must always be an open repertoire, expanding daily to address the unique context and faith-walk of the present-day congregations. The free song often provides in the need for an open repertoire. Hoondert (2009:84) concludes that a new official hymnal will have to be a “breedboek” which includes enough songs and genres of songs to utilize in a practice of bricolage. He concludes that bricolage liturgy asks for a bricolage hymnal (*ibid*).

The forming of two commissions or workgroups within the DRC (FLAM and VONKK) during the general synods of 2003 and 2007, was a huge step forward with regards to church singing and church music, and the possibilities of bricolage liturgical singing.

- Through this system the songs and music of contemporary artists (composers and singers) are continually selected and made available for congregational singing, thus reducing the breach between official church music on the one side and contemporary band music (FLAM) and contemporary classic music (VONKK) on the other side (see Appendix 1 & 2).
- Through this system a wider variety of styles could be brought into the worship service, making provision for a wider variety of cultures, sub-cultures and spiritualities. It contributes in creating a bricolage repertoire.
- On the negative side the authority is still placed in the hands of a small group of people who decide on the content of church singing. The use of the free song (within the presbytery of Potchefstroom-Moorivier) clearly illustrates that songs from the *Liedboek van die Kerk* as well as selected songs of FLAM and VONKK form only a part of the contextual song of the congregation. The repertoire of bricolage is wider than the *Liedboek van die Kerk*, FLAM and VONKK.

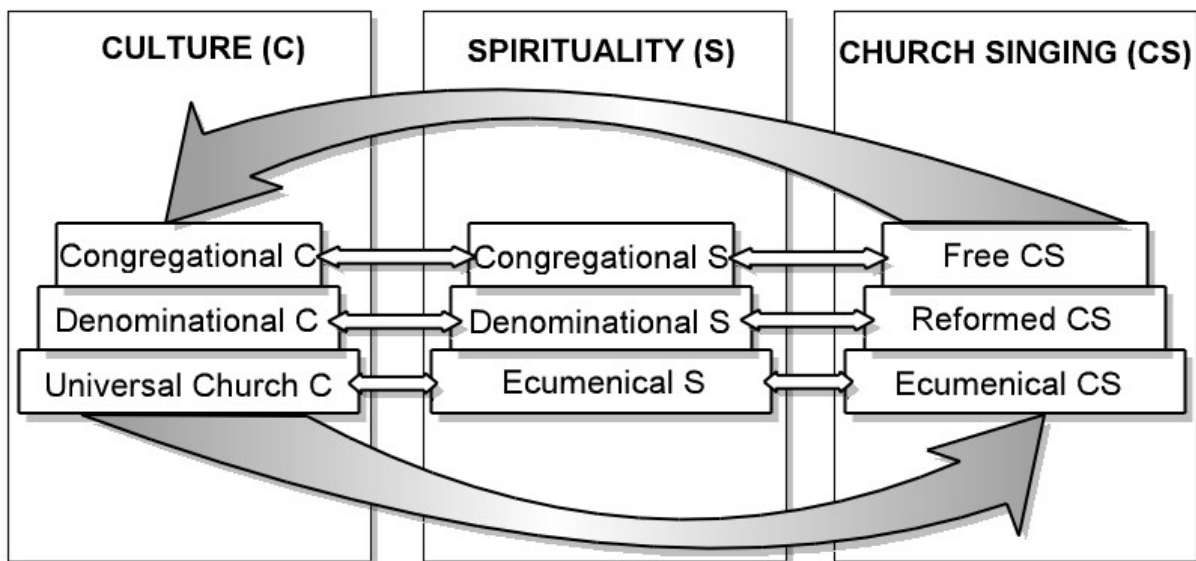
- The fees payable to the CCLI for singing these (few) songs are very high compared to the fees payable for singing the official song of the church. Within a postmodern world there is suspicion towards such power and control.

In a postmodern age, and especially within a phase of liminality, the conversation (not necessarily the commission) on church music will have to include participants from other cultures (educated, uneducated, elder people, youth, *et cetera*) and musicological orientations (representing different styles and genres of music), thus more inclusive. By means of a metaphor: the quality of red wine can not be fully evaluated and judged by a screening committee with a preference for white wine. Somehow the lovers of red wine as well as the lovers of white wine will have to be in conversation about the quality of the wine.

It was argued in the literature study that no style of music is in itself sacred or secular, therefore the church (DRC) will have to utilize different styles of music in the act of church singing. Due to the lack of different styles of songs, free songs are often used to fill this gap in church singing. The gap between the styles and genres of the official hymnal on the one side and the styles and genres of contemporary cultures on the other, is often bridged with the use of free songs.

The use of the free song can schematically be illustrated as follows:

Figure 14: Use of the free song



The positive uses of the free song could thus be summarized as follows:

- Actively engaging the congregation in the process of writing, composing or selecting liturgical music.
- Crossing the borders of language, denomination, generation, musical genre and presentation.
- Negotiating the local narrative of the local congregation.
- Expressing the cultures and spiritualities within the local congregation.
- Creating a bridge (missional) towards the musical genres and styles of outsiders.
- Making provision for more genres of music.
- Expressing the second leg of spirituality within the DRC spirituality, often referred to as Scottish pietism and Puritanism.

The free song could thus be of great value to the local congregation in their unique situation, negotiating the influence of culture(s), spiritualities, postmodernism and the local narrative.

The negative uses of the free song could be summarized as follows:

- An uncontrolled practice of liturgical singing.
- A possible neglect of the the official church song.
- A possible pragmatism, using everything that 'works'.
- The possibility of poor or impure theology within the lyrics of the song.
- The possibility of poor music within the liturgy.
- The possibility of poor texts (lyrics).

The dangers or threats of the free song could not be denied, especially within a postmodern culture where the local congregation is increasingly making decisions by itself. On the other side, the potential of the free song could hardly be denied.

7. GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE FREE SONG

It has been argued in this study that the free song has always played and still plays an important role in the church and more specific in the liturgy of the local congregation. Although the free song has an important place and function, the free song is contextual and temporary; **it can only exist and function within the creative tension with the formal and official song of the church.** The song of the congregation can and may never be reduced to free songs alone. The local DRC-congregation is part of the greater body of Christ within the DRC, the Reformed tradition and the universal church. It does not only have a local story but it shares the meta-narrative of thousands of years with the other parts

of the body, as well as the meta-narrative of the Reformed tradition. Therefore the shared song (official hymnal of the DRC as well as ecumenical songs) is of utmost importance and may never be absent from the worship service; the meta-narrative must deliberately be remembered and celebrated. The challenge of church singing is to be faithful to the past and the present; to remember as well as to observe. But the worship service does not only emphasize the local church's unity with the universal church; it also emphasizes the local church's unique place and role in the universal church, thus their unique understanding of the Word of God. These two (ecumenical and confessional) must always be in balance.

The following guidelines could be drawn for the use of the free song:

- Free songs can only exist in the **creative tension with the formal and official church song**. A congregation who only sings free songs, is in danger of forgetting the meta-narrative and forsaking its identity as Reformed church. This balance must be visible in all worship services, including the (main) worship service in the main building, worship services at special occasions, student worship services, youth worship services and children's worship services. A balance between these two forms of songs guards against traditionalism and contemporalism. It helps in maintaining the balance between the meta-narrative and the local narrative.
- **Free songs are provisional**. Although free songs are born in specific contexts in contemporary life and fulfill a crucial role in the liturgy of the local congregation, it remains provisional. In course of time these songs have to be weighed, evaluated, improved or even changed. Some free songs will never be more than a contextual song sung by a given congregation in a given situation (like a *gemeentelied*). Others will (in course of time) get wider acceptance and be used by more congregations or churches (eg. *Amazing Grace*, *Come, now is the time to worship*, and *I lift my hands*). Some of these songs may in course of time be included in an official hymnal (like *Amazing Grace* in translated form), and receive a new status as denominational song. Some free songs will never be included in any official hymnal but still function as a ecumenical song, expressing common truths and values (eg. *Our God is an awesome God*).
- **Free songs are temporary**. Often a free song is used only once or twice within a given congregation, and never again. Many of the songs composed by Von Zinzendorf were only composed for and used in a given congregation and situation and forgotten afterwards. The purpose of free songs is often not to express eternal truths but to articulate the faith or lack of faith in a given situation. For this reason

free songs will often come and go; their *shelf life* is sometimes very short. There are also free songs that survived the test of time and are still used widely (almost universally). These songs are often (in the course of time) included in official hymnals.

- **Free songs are contextual.** Free songs are closely connected to the congregation and situation where they are sung. Often their value could not be estimated from the outside, as they are closely related to the cultures and spiritualities of a given congregation. Their purpose is often not to express universal truths but local or contextual truths. The well-known song *What a friend we have in Jesus* can only be understood against the background of the poem writer (Joseph Scriven, 1855) trying to comfort his mother who was living in Ireland while he was in Canada. The value this song had in that situation can hardly be estimated and understood by the present-day church.

8. CRITERIA FOR FREE SONGS

The scopus of this study was to illustrate in principle the important place and function of the free song within the reformed worship service, with specific focus on the DRC in South Africa. It falls outside the scopus of this study to do a detailed study on the criteria for the use of the free song as well as the musicological criteria for the composition or use of the free song. In the course of this study, three important criteria were discovered in Scripture, namely:

- Due to the theocentric nature of worship, free songs must (just as the official church song) be to the **glory of God**. The ultimate aim of liturgical singing (just like liturgy itself) is the glory of God. Therefore the text (lyrics) must be in accordance with the truths of Scripture. The music must be aimed at the glory of God and not at the gratification of the singing members. Every congregation must continuously ask themselves if their liturgical singing is (still) aimed at the glory of God.
- As with the formal church song, the claim is laid upon the worshiper **to offer his/her best**. Within the context of the local congregation the best lyrics, music, instruments and presentation must be chosen so that the singing of the congregation can really be a worthy offering to God. As indicated earlier, the nature of such an offering will differ from culture to culture and sub-culture to sub-culture. The offering will necessarily be coloured by the cultures and spiritualities within the local congregation, as it remains their service (*latreia*) to God.

- The use of free songs (just like the official song of the church) must be to the **edification of the whole congregation**. The purpose of liturgical singing is to upbuild the congregation and not to divide the congregation. In every congregation there must be a continuous process of selecting, weighing and improving the lyrics, music and presentation of church singing. This process will differ from culture to culture and thus from congregation to congregation.

It is obvious that these criteria are context-bound and can only be applied within the local congregation. The value of a song cannot be weighed in terms of the quality of the text and melody alone; it must also be evaluated in regards of the role and function within the local congregation. This value differs from culture to culture and congregation to congregation. A continuous process of inter-culturation will guard against subjectivism.

9. CREATING A CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS

It was argued earlier that the church (DRC) is in a phase of liminality, moving from one *societas* to another. It is clear that liturgical singing is also in a liminal phase, moving away from a *societas* that existed for years, towards a new *societas* of which the outcome is yet unknown. The present liminal phase (with regards to liturgy and liturgical singing) is characterized by experimental liturgical singing; often uncontrolled and unparalleled experiments in liturgical singing. In order to be successful in glorifying God, offering the worshiper's (or congregation's) best and edifying the whole congregation, a constructive process must be created to accompany congregations in a liminal phase.

Venter, Dreyer & Dreyer (2002) did a study in 2002 on the communication of faith in a pluriform world greatly influenced by postmodernism. After discussing the impact of postmodernism, they arrived at the solution: empowering the liturgist (“Die bemagtiging van die verkondiger”) (2002:89). Thus the world (context) is a given; the liturgist will have to be empowered to fulfill his/her task in the (new) context. The same would be true of liturgical singing. A thorough process of empowering liturgists, musicians and music directors is indispensable. Tolerance plays an important role in this process (2002:89). The following could be considered in a process of empowering the liturgist and music director:

- Congregations must be taught, trained and equipped with regards to liturgical singing. There is much ignorance about liturgical singing, leading to traditionalism on the one side or reckless experimenting on the other. The latter often leads to a

wreckless use of the free song.

- Congregations must be encouraged to understand their own culture(s) and types of spirituality, as well as their shared culture and spirituality within their denomination. All (free) songs are not fit for all congregations. Genres of music must be carefully selected to express and form the culture and spirituality of the local congregation.
- Congregations must be taught to evaluate the lyrics and music of free songs before utilizing it in liturgy. This is a process that has not been started yet in many congregations. The following questions could be asked; many more could be added:
 - Is the theology of the lyrics in line with Scripture and Reformed theology?
 - Is the text of the song (metaphors, language, expressions, *et cetera*) true to the culture of the local congregation?
 - Does the melody of the song carry and enhance the lyrics of the song?
 - Does the melody of the song recall any (negative) associations within the cultures of the local congregation?
 - Are the text and melody singable to most members of the local congregation?
 - What is the purpose and function of this song?
 - Will this song edify the congregation or divide the congregation.
- This process of evaluation could be stimulated by the following:
 - The pastor of the local congregation plays a prominent role in worship renewal. If he/she does not dream that liturgical singing could be more than what they know and experience, the chances are good that there will be no worship renewal. Worship renewal starts with a vision and a dream of the pastor and the leaders. All the pastors and musicians at all the congregations in the empirical study reported that they (the pastors or liturgists) make the final decision regarding the repertoire of songs for the worship service. Some of them will consult the organist or worship leader, but the final decision in most congregations is made by the pastor. In over-simplified terms one can say that the congregation sings what the pastor approves. The way to worship renewal in the DRC implies training of the pastors (and leaders). If song and music play an important role in the worship service (and it is argued here that it does), then pastors must be trained in liturgical singing and music. The local congregation can only be trusted with the free song if the liturgist understands the liturgical place, role and function of liturgical music. Often the greatest reason for the poor music or choices of music in congregations is not wilfulness but ignorance. There is a great lack of knowledge regarding

liturgical singing.

- Hymnology must be part of the curriculum and training of pastors. Reich (2003:773) observes: “In der akademischen Theologie gehört die wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit Kirchenlied und Gesangbuch nicht zu den verpflichtenden Inhalten des Studiengangs. Man kann ein ganzes Studium absolvieren, ohne auch nur einmal ein Gesangbuch in der Hand gehabt zu haben”. There is an urgent need for hymnological training of pastors. But Hymnology can not be taught as it has been done for centuries. As stated earlier, Hymnology could be studied from three perspectives, namely a fundamental or principal perspective, a historical perspective and a practical perspective. All these perspectives will have to be included but in a wider and more inclusive fashion. The whole spectrum of music must be part of the curriculum. It is one-sided to concentrate on (only) one musical genre like classical church music. Hymnology will have to be honest about other genres, styles, cultures, spiritualities, presentations, *et cetera*.
- The presentation of regular seminars and holiday schools (*vakansieskole*) on liturgical singing, where congregations could be taught and stimulated in a constructive way. At present such seminars (*vakansieskole*) are presented for writing, writing poetry, *et cetera*, but there are no seminars for liturgical singing and the compilation, composition and use of free songs.
- The availability of skilled helpers. As seen in the empirical study, many new songs (often *kontrafaktes*) are born in the congregations and fulfill an important function in the local narrative. Often these new songs need some revision by people gifted in text or music. Skilled helpers could therefore be of great value in improving the lyrics and melody of free songs, making them even more appropriate.
- As indicated earlier, postmodern culture allows a multitude of possibilities; making room for different interpretations. Therefore tolerance is of utmost importance in this process (cf. Venter, Dreyer & Dreyer 2002:89). With regards to liturgical singing, this openness towards different possibilities and interpretations as well as the accompanying tolerance, is desperately needed. Every congregation must be true to God, inculturating the gospel into their unique cultures and spiritualities. Just as one culture is not superior to others, one form or interpretation of music is not superior to others. In this process there must be room for positive and upbuilding critics, but not for negative and degrading critics. Congregations will have to make room for one

another to discover their unique worshiping of God within their unique context. In such a context and atmosphere, the worship war could become a worship celebration.

10. FIELDS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- The aim of this study is to indicate the close relationship between liturgy, culture, spirituality and the free song from a theological, liturgical and social (cultural) perspective. As indicated in the introduction, this study has no musicological interest. Therefore the following studies could have great value in future.
 - A study on the musicological principles for the use of the free song within congregations with varying cultures and spiritualities. Will the musicological principles be the same in different cultural environments, for example within a highly educated culture and a less educated culture?
 - A study on the training of pastors, music directors and congregations on the nature and purpose of liturgical singing.
 - A study on the value of and guidelines for an inter-denominational (including churches from all Christian traditions) conversation on church singing.
 - Within the South-African context where congregations are becoming increasingly multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual, a study on the implications thereof for church music will have to be done.
 - A study on the implications of copyright for congregations trying to inculturate their song by means of *kontrafaktes* to existing melodies.

11. CONCLUSION

As indicated in the introduction, the aim of this study is not to confirm the status quo but to improve the praxis of singing to the glory of God, or in the formulation of Wepener (2009:19): “[t]he final move in doing practical theology is action, a renewed practice of faith.” This study aims at indicating that a renewed practice of faith will critically acknowledge the role and function of the free song within the local congregation. Within a renewed practice of faith, a healthy relation between the official song of the church and the free song would be encouraged and maintained, leading to an even worthier offering of praise to the Almighty God (Heb 13:15).