

## **Speech of deputies DGK (restored) to Synod FRCA Bunbury – June 2018 (meeting in Perth metro WA, facilities of the Southern River church)**

Chairman, brothers delegates, brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

On behalf of the DGK (restored) it's our privilege to offer you heartfelt greetings. We thank you for giving us the opportunity to say some words to you. Our own synod in the Netherlands closed only two weeks ago. We regard ourselves greatly privileged for being able to be present at your synod these days. Not because we can't get enough of synod meetings. But because we really like to meet you and especially, and it is good to have been with you in the past days. And with our presence here we also want to show that our request to your churches is seriously meant and very important to us. That was also the reason that we were always present at your synods since 2003. Because we recognize you as a church based on scripture, confessions and the reformed church order. For that reason we would like to continue or/and establish an official sister-church relationship. Finally it gives us the opportunity to inform you of a number of important decisions recently made by our synod.

### **Explanation of the situation of DGK**

What is the present situation of DGK (restored)? We have about 1.300 members, divided among 9 churches and 2 ward congregations. In our federation, especially in Groningen, we see an increase of members coming from the RCN. Especially we'd like to mention that the ministers rev. van Egmond and rev. Gunnink (both recently retired ministers) made the move from the RCN and joined the DGK.

For clarity sake we want to point out another thing. Sometimes we hear rumours concerning the opinion as if DGK clings to the liberation of 2003 as the only moment of reformation. There are some people who say that if you leave the RCN and want to join the DGK, you have to admit that 2003 was the only right date, the moment God called his people out of the RCN and that every other moment of liberation after 2003 is too late. Well, this is definitely not true. We never ask from people that they say 2003 was the only right moment to liberate themselves from the unscriptural decisions made in the RCN. We don't discuss the moment of liberation when brothers and sisters want to become a member of our churches. We ask people if they left the RCN for scriptural reasons, live according to Scripture and if they agree with the confessions of the church.

And we do pray and keep praying that the Lord opens hearts and minds and give people the courage to leave the RCN. May the Lord bless your decisions regarding the RCN. So that the churches and their members may return to Gods Word and the confessions. Virtually every week our prayers are devoted to the Lord for the repentance and turning back of the brothers and sisters in the RCN. They are brothers and sisters with whom we are still connected in many ways, through friendships, relatives, schools. At the same time we are most thankful that in recent times the Lord gave courage and strength to many people to break with the unscriptural ways of these churches.

At present our federation has eight ministers, five of them in active service and three retired. A number of ministers also cooperate at the theological training college. In our search to give this training college the most fruitful content, we also watch with great interest to what your synod is going to decide concerning the question starting your own theological seminary.

### **Contacts with GKN**

We'd also like to inform you on the contacts between DGK and GKN. During the last contact with your previous synod and deputies you rightly urged our churches to seek contact with

and make overtures to the GKN so we may come to unity with them. As you know, DGK and GKN both are federations originating from the RCN. As DGK we also see it as our calling to seek contact with GKN with an eye to growing closer together and, the Lord willing, unity. Our churches experienced it as very painful that the GKN sees an obstacle in the substantial talks between the two federations.

The GKN demands that DGK publicly distances itself from an article which was published on a personal title in our church magazine. DGK deputies, speaking for our churches with deputies of GKN, kept and keep saying that everything can be discussed. Many of the actual matters and other things which are written about have a connection with a private vision of the past. Those matters should be talked about. But to our great disappointment GKN now has conditioned that no further talks are possible, unless the concerning article has been taken back. Both our deputies and later our synod thought it an unnecessary, but certainly also an unfair and not to be justified condition for continuing the talks. Three weeks ago our synod sent a letter to GKN in which the hearty wish and desire to re-enter talks is expressed. We'd like to ask your deputies if you can advise us how to re-open these talks with GKN. And especially ask you to pray within your churches for this unity, because of the glory of our Lord. We really wish to come to closer relations with the GKN. And realise that in these times of secularisation in which so many people leave the churches we as small reformed churches in the Netherlands need each other badly.

### **Contacts with foreign churches**

Furthermore about our contacts with churches abroad. We'll start with our sister church in Abbotsford (Canada). The synod decided to enter talks with the sister church at Abbotsford about the catholicity of the church in connection with the justification of its secession and its present ecclesiastical position. This decision has been made, because expressions of Abbotsford about churches with the Westminster Standards, have raised various questions with us regarding their vision on the catholicity of the church. We really hope that our sister church in Abbotsford will have an open mind for this discussion and that it may contribute to a right vision and way of acting, particularly there where the catholicity of the church is at stake. This decision makes it clear that DGK wants to be fully reformed and roundly catholic. In this light we'd like to enter talks with the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) as well.

Next we'd like to mention shortly that we continue our contacts with churches in Northern Ireland and South Korea. The churches in Indonesia have also been put to our attention by rev. H.G. Gunnink. In the eighties Rev. Gunnink worked as a missionary in Kalimantan Barat (Western Borneo). In 2016 they sent rev. Gunnink an invitation to give a seminar on the Canons of Dordt. The seminar was attended by office-bearers of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia, Kalimantan Barat and students of the theological training institute. During that visit he was asked to teach at their seminary (STTR) He was able to do this in 2017 and 2018, each time for a few weeks, and was requested by their teaching staff to continue doing this each year as long as he sees fit. Especially for the churches of South Korea and Indonesia it is our wish to communicate with your deputies, so as to make mutual use of each other's knowledge and experience as much as possible.

Via one of our congregations we maintain contact with rev. Z. Toth, a reformed minister in Western Ukraine.

### **De Bazuin**

Finally we don't want to keep it from you that DGK made a decision in which we had the Australian Free Reformed Churches as a positive example. As you may know we have a national church magazine, the Bazuin, published under the responsibility of our synod. Our

recent synod decided to make it a magazine which no longer is the responsibility of synod, but nevertheless is bound to the churches. This binding has been realised in the same way you have organised things with your magazine *Una Sancta*. We hope that in this way our family magazine may contribute even better to the growth of the belief in our triune God and to a life dedicated to the LORD. We thank you very much for the space and time you have given us here. We wish to ask you to keep praying for the churches of Jesus Christ in the Netherlands. We are small and vulnerable churches, which in spite of sins and shortcomings want to build on the foundation Christ Himself has laid.

### **Greetings**

We would also like to use the opportunity to convey the hearty greetings of our retired rev. P. van Gulp. Some of you wonder if retired ministers are able to contribute for longer time towards your own seminary. Well it is possible we can tell. Rev. van Gulp still does at his age of 97... He almost functions longer as a retired than as an active minister... Ok he is special. Some of you may know him from the time he was a minister in Albany a long time ago. Especially you brother Old. He wishes to express his sympathy and love for you, the churches which he used to serve here in Albany. He'd like us to pass on the following on his behalf to you:

*I understand your earlier reservations which you had with regard to our liberation in 2003, because you thought it was premature. With sadness we have to establish that since that time the decline and deformation of the RCN have been unstoppable. I would appreciate it so much when your synod might see an opening to work on a way to restore a sister-church relation with us. I remember the early years of the Australian churches during which our Dutch ministers by their efforts have impregnated and formed the reformed course of your churches, in which course you have remained over the years. It would really be heart-warming if those old and special bonds could be restored and continued.*

### **We pray**

We pray for God's blessing for the rest of your synod work. May the LORD bless your work for the edification of His congregations in Australia. May the LORD give you continuing faith and love for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. May you continue to stay firm in His work. Finally we wish to encourage you with the words of the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:20: "*And see, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.*"

We thank you for your attention.

On behalf of deputies DGK churches in the Netherlands for relations with churches abroad,  
Rev. C. Koster  
Rev. M.A. Sneep  
*June, 2018*