



CHRISTELIJKE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN
NEDERLAND

*Deputaten Buitenlandse Kerken
Foreign Relations Committee*

Secretary:

Rev. J.W. Wullschleger
Koolzaadlaan 43
3893 HA Zeewolde
The Netherlands

Email: wwull@solcon.nl
Tel. +31 36 7501403

To the Synodical Interim Committee
of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand
Rev. P van der Wel, stated clerk

Zeewolde, May 13, 2014

Dear brothers,

We greet you in the Name of our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Thank you very much for your invitation to attend your Synod in the fall, the Lord willing. However, we are unable to attend your assembly. May the Lord bless your Synodical meetings.

Our bonds as sister churches date back to the time when Dutch immigrants moved to New Zealand. This migration started after WWII and resulted in an official relationship between us in the year 1956. Since then we have maintained this relationship of full correspondence. Members from our churches in The Netherlands joined the RCNZ, or visited relatives and friends. It was a pleasure to meet your delegate, Rev. Dirk van Garderen, in Cardiff at the ICRC as well as informally in The Netherlands during his trip two months ago. We sensed a spiritual oneness in the Lord.

We cherish this bond of unity. However, as you will agree, it is not enough to formally have a relationship; this relationship should be maintained in a meaningful way. If we take this seriously, we should for instance visit each other's synods on a regular basis. As far as we can see this has happened only once in a while.

Lately, as churches we have started evaluating the contacts outside of Europe. The crucial question is: How meaningful is it to continue a relationship with other churches, if it is very difficult to meet each other regularly? Our focus is shifting more and more to Europe.

In the meantime, the ICRC has become a platform where churches of the same reformed persuasion meet every four years. In our view this conference is a useful means to entertain meaningful contact. Our proposal is – and we would be glad to hear your response to this – to discontinue our

Communication 1
Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

relationship in the form of a full correspondence, and instead to continue our relationship via the ICRC.

Proposing this, the question arises: But are we not losing something that we wish to keep? The rules of ICRC membership do not fully cover the privileges we extend to each other in a full correspondence relationship. Such privileges are, for instance, extending calls to each other's ministers, and accepting attestations of each other's members. Although it may not be likely that in the future we will utilize these privileges a lot, neither do we exclude the possibility.

On our part, we would like to leave the possibility open to extend calls and to accept membership attestations, and to find ways to include this in our church order. We are studying the matter and will come up with a proposal once we have concluded it.

To bring you up to date on the latest developments within our churches, I attach the main decisions of our last held Synod of 2013.

May the Lord bless you richly and keep you faithful to His Word and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

With heartfelt, brotherly greetings,

On behalf of the Foreign Relations Committee
Of the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

Rev. J. Wim Wullschleger, secr.

Main decisions of Synod CGKN 2013

I. Theological training

The Synod approved the effort to establish a broader theological institution. This institution is to be supported by broad orthodox-protestant grass-roots. Its reformed identity needs to be secured. If this becomes a reality, our own theological seminary will be relegated to this institute.

II. Foreign Missions

The Synod gave instructions to reflect on the specific approach of mission work in Europe, and to translate this into a concrete course of action.

III. Homosexuality

The Synod adopted a study report containing a vision document and a pastoral guide with regard to homosexuality and homosexual relations. On the basis of this report the Synod issued the following statement:

1. The General synod acknowledges that in the past the Christian Reformed Churches failed in providing a specific pastoral approach in dealing with homosexuality and homosexual relations;
2. Within the church of Christ, members with a homosexual orientation have the same position as other members; their orientation has no bearing on this. They are full-fledged and equal members of the congregation, share in the mutual care and are engaged with their own gifts for the upbuilding of the whole;
3. Sexual intercourse between persons of the same gender and relations in which that intercourse takes shape, are not in harmony with the Word of God and thus they must be identified as sin. In doing this, the church has to follow the path of ecclesiastical admonition in conformity with Scripture, confession and church order;
4. The application of this Biblical speaking with regard to homosexuality and homosexual relations in preaching, catechizing and pastoral care needs to take place with the mind of Christ.

The report will be available in its entirety within the next few months on our website www.cgk.nl.

IV. Unity at home

The Synod gave a new stimulus to the local congregations to seek ecclesiastical unity with other churches of reformed persuasion. The possibility to invite Reformed ministers from other churches to our pulpits has been enlarged. A number of concerns and points of attention were formulated with regard to the denomination-wide discussions with the Dutch Reformed Churches (a split-off in 1969 from the Liberated Churches) and the Reformed Churches Liberated.

V. Foreign Relations

The Synod decided to offer a relationship of limited correspondence to the Heritage Reformed Churches (HRC) in North America and full correspondence to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (EPCEW).