

21.3 BESKRYWINGSPUNT GK BENONI – VROU IN DIE AMP (VIDA) (Artt 123, 300)

21.3 POINT OF DESCRIPTION GK BENONI – WOMEN IN THE OFFICES (WITO) (Arts 123, 300)

- A. Die Beskrywingspunt is gestel.
The Point of description is tabled.
- B. **Besluit:** Word verwys na Kommissie Leerstellig.
Decision: Referred to Commission Doctrinal.
- C. Ds PJ Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen rapporteer namens Kommissie Leerstellig.
Rev PJ Jansen van Nieuwenhuizen reports on behalf of Commission Doctrinal.

D. BESKRYWINGSPUNT / POINT OF DESCRIPTION

<p>Die GK Benoni versoek die Algemene Sinode van die GKSA (2018) om die volgende besluit te neem:</p> <p>Versoek Die verkiesing van persone (ook vroue) in die ampte van die gemeente is 'n saak wat op die plaaslike Kerkraad se tafel hoort, en daar afgehandel kan en moet word.</p> <p>Stelling Dit is nie die bedoeling van hierdie Beskrywingspunt om na een of die ander kant te oortuig oor die saak van VIDA nie. Ons betoog is juis dat oortuigingsvermoë ontbreek – na beide kante toe.</p> <p>Motivering <u>Kerkorde</u> Dit is uit KO, artt 4, 22 en 24 duidelik dat die Kerkraad verantwoordelik is vir die beroeping en bevestiging van persone in die dienste van die gemeente, in die geval van <u>predikante</u>, in samewerking met die kerkverband.</p> <p><u>Die dilemma</u> Dit het oor die afgelope dekades baie duidelik geword dat daar twee uiteenlopende verstaanswyses is oor die verkiesbaarheid van vroue tot die ampte, al dan nie. Dit raak nie net die GKSA nie, maar die Gereformeerde Kerke wêreldwyd. Die twee verstaanswyses het selfs name: “Komplementêr” en “Egalitêr”. 'n Eenvoudige websoektog op verskeie (Gereformeerde/Presbiteriaanse) kerke wêreldwyd se webwerwe toon aan dat daar wêreldwyd nog geen klarigheid oor die saak bestaan nie</p>	<p>The GK Benoni requests the General Synod of the GKSA (2018) to make the following decision:</p> <p>Request The election of individuals (also women) to the offices of the congregation is a matter for the local Church Council and it is there that it can and must be addressed.</p> <p>Statement It is not the intent of this Point of Description to advocate either side of the matter of WITO. It is indeed our contention that there is a lack of conviction – on both sides.</p> <p>Motivation <u>Church Order</u> CO, arts 4, 22 and 24 make it clear that the Church Council is responsible for the call and ordination of members to the offices of the congregation, in the case of <u>ministers</u>, in consultation with the denomination.</p> <p><u>The dilemma</u> It has become abundantly clear over the last few decades that there are two distinct interpretations on the election of women to the offices or not. It not only affects the GKSA, but Reformed Churches worldwide. These interpretations even have their own terms: “Complementary” and “Egalitarian”. A simple web search on different (Reformed/Presbyterian) churches globally reflects the lack of clarity on the matter (PCA, GKN, GKN(V), CRCNA, CRS Aus, OPC and many more – not because these</p>
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(PCA, GKN, GKN(V), CRCNA, CRS Austr, OPC, en vele meer – dit is nie dat hierdie kerkverbande nie besluite neem nie, maar dit bly in diskussies terugkom, soortgelyk as in die GKSA).

Die verskille binne kerke en kerkverbande is so heftig dat Walter C Kaiser (jr) die volgende opmerking maak: “...some have grown so weary of this discussion that they have just given up and decided that nothing more can be said that will move any others from their entrenched positions” (:5). Dit is grootliks hoe die saak tans in die GKSA ervaar word!

Sinodes van die GKSA

Vanaf 1988 tot 2016 het die een Sinode na die ander die saak ter tafel geneem, en kon daar nie tot ‘n klinkklare konklusie gekom word nie.

Manlik en vroulik in die kerk

In 2008 word ‘n studie, deur die GTV geïnisieer, gepubliseer. “Manlik en Vroulik in die kerk. Geslagtelikheid en die besondere dienste”. Sinode 2009 se Rapport “Saak van die vrou” het hierdie werk gebruik as ‘n belangrike inset vir hulle Rapport. Die geagte navorsers kom ook tot die konklusie: Daar is twee moontlike verstaanswyses. Dit lui soos volg: “Die deelnemers aan die navorsing stem saam dat die verskil nie die gevolg is van ‘n verskil in Skrifbeskoulike of hermeneutiese vertrekpunte nie. Dit is ook nie die gevolg van onhoudbare wetenskaplike eksegese nie. Daar word alleen verskil oor watter verstaansmoontlikheid eksegeties die mees oortuigende is. Verskille oor die oortuigingskrag van eksegese hoef egter nie tot kerklike verdeeldheid te lei nie” (:202).

Hiervolgens moet ons aflei dat, as daar tydens Sinodes voortgegaan word om die saak in een of ander rigting te stuur, dit noodwendig tot verdeeldheid sal lei.

Die volgende vraag ontstaan

Hoe oortuig ons mekaar verder van teenoorstaande standpunte as elkeen met betroubare Skrifbeskouings, hermeneutiese vertrekpunte en wetenskaplike eksegese gewerk het?

denominations don’t make decisions, but that it keeps on coming up for discussion – similar to the GKSA).

The divisions within churches and denominations are so hefty that Walter C Kaiser (jr) remarked as follows: “...some have grown so weary of this discussion that they have just given up and decided that nothing more can be said that will move any others from their entrenched positions” (:5). This is basically the state of affairs in the GKSA at present!

Synods of the GKSA

From 1988 to 2016 the matter was tabled at one Synod after another, without reaching a clear-cut conclusion.

Male and female in the church

A study initiated by the GTV was published in 2008. “Male and female in the church. Gender and the special offices.” Synod 2009’s Report “The issue of women” referred to this work as important component to their report. The respected researchers also came to the conclusion that there are two possible interpretations, which reads as follows: “The participants of the research agree that the debate is not the result of a difference in Scriptural or hermeneutic points of departure. It is also not the result of untenable scientific exegesis. It is simply disagreement over which interpretations are exegetically most convincing. Disagreement over the convincingness of exegesis does not need to lead to division in the church” (:202).

This leads to the conclusion that if the matter continues to be directed into one or another direction during synods, it will lead to division.

The following question arises:

How do we convince each other of opposing stances when each worked according to reliable Scriptural views, hermeneutic points of departure and scientific exegesis?

Wat bly dan oor waarmee verdere studie gedoen kan word om te probeer oortuig? Om die saak in 'n rigting van oortuiging te stuur, lei ons na 'n doodloopstraat. Daar bly geen ander uitweg oor, as om die saak van die vrou in die besondere ampte in die hande van die plaaslike Kerkrade te laat, soos ons in hierdie Beskrywingspunt versoek nie.

Die slotsom van bogenoemde studiestuk beveel hierdie pad self aan in die finale gevolgtrekking.

*“Die verskille wat daar wel is, raak nie Skrifbeskoulike, eksegetiese en hermeneutiese vertrekpunte nie. Eerder is dit toe te skryf aan verskil in beoordeling van die eksegetiese oortuigingskrag van die betrokke standpunte. **Die verantwoordelikheid die kerke is om hierdie verskille, in soverre as wat dit in die kerke bestaan, in afhanklikheid van die Here met groot verantwoordelikheid te bestuur**” (:205).*

Sinode 2009

Die uiteenlopende standpunte is onder andere baie duidelik sigbaar in die Rapport wat voor Sinode 2009 gedien het (Acta 2009:583vv). Daardie Rapport het duidelik gewys dat daar twee konklusies gevorm kan word op grond van 'n eksegetiese studie. Nie filosofie of dogmas of buite-Bybelse redenasies het die afleidings in daardie studie bepaal nie, maar die eksegetiese en hermeneutiese van Skrifgedeeltes. Op die ou einde is besluit oor die saak op grond van die oortuigingskrag al dan nie van spesifieke eksegeses. Daar kan nie gesê word dat die Bybel die deurslag gegee het nie, maar eerder die meerderheid van “oortuigdes”.

Hierdie werkswyse van die Sinode was in stryd met NGB, art 7.

*...”Ons mag ook geen geskrifte van mense, hoe heilig die mense ook al was, met die Goddelike Skrif gelykstel nie; ook mag ons nie die gewoonte of die groot getalle of oudheid of opvolging van tye of van persone of **kerkvergaderings**, verordeninge of besluite met die waarheid van God gelykstel nie, want die waarheid is bo alles”.*

Die Rapport aan Sinode 2009 sluit af met die volgende stelling:

Aard van die verskil tussen die twee

What is then left to study to find a convincing argument?

Steering the matter towards a certain conviction is a dead-end street. There is no other choice but to leave the matter of women in the special offices in the hands of the local Church Councils, as we request in this Point of Description.

The conclusion of above study itself recommends this in its final conclusion.

*“The differences that exist do not relate to Scriptural, exegetic and hermeneutic points of departure. Instead it can be attributed to a difference in judgement of the exegetic convincingness of the relevant stances. **The responsibility of the churches is to responsibly manage these differences, in as far as they exist in the churches, in dependence on the Lord**” (:205).*

Synod 2009

The opposing stances are *inter alia* clearly evident in the report that was tabled to the Synod 2009 (Acta 2009:583 et seq.). The Report shows that exegetic study makes two conclusions possible. The findings of the study were not determined by philosophy or doctrine or non-Biblical reasoning, but the exegesis and hermeneutics of Scriptural texts. In the end the decision about the matter comes down to “convincingness” or not of specific exegeses. It cannot be said that the Bible was the decisive factor, but rather the majority of the “convinced”.

This method of the Synod is in conflict with BC, art 7.

*“Therefore we must not consider human writings, no matter how holy their authors may have been, equal to the divine writings; nor may we put custom, nor the majority, nor age, nor the passage of time or persons, nor **councils**, decrees, or official decisions above the truth of God, for truth is above everything else”.*

The Report to Synod 2009 concludes with the following statement:

Nature of difference between the two

standpunte

Die twee standpunte soos uiteengesit in hierdie Rapport rus op die Skrifbeskoulike en hermeneutiese vertrekpunte ooreenkomstig die leer van die kerk soos uiteengesit in punte 6 en 7. Die verskil tussen die twee standpunte lê op die vlak van eksegetiese sintese.

Die saak van vroue in die besondere dienste al dan nie, is nie opsigself 'n belydenissaak nie. Om hierdie redes (vgl 10.16.1 en 10.16.2) behoort besluitneming hieroor nie die eenheid van die kerke in gedrang te bring nie (GKSA 2009:662 (Digitale uitgawe)).

Ander kerkverbande

Die CRCNA sê die volgende op hulle webwerf: *All congregations in the Christian Reformed Church in North America may allow women to serve in the office of minister, elder, deacon, or commissioned pastor. The CRC recognizes that there are two different perspectives and convictions on this issue, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God (for the biblical-theological argumentation undergirding the CRC's approach to this issue, see Agenda for Synod 2000, pp355-73; www.crcna.org/SynodResources).*

Ons is bewus van verskille oor hierdie saak in 'n verskeidenheid van Gereformeerde Kerke wêreldwyd (kyk hierbo).

Bo redelike twyfel

Dit is duidelik dat daar nie bo redelike twyfel eensgesindheid is oor die saak van die VIDA nie. Dit moet dan gevra word of daar voortgegaan moet word om eendersheid oor die saak van VIDA af te dwing as daar nie bo redelike twyfel bewyse gevoer kan word vir óf 'n egalitêre óf 'n komplementêre verstaan van die Skrif oor die saak nie. Dit lei tot skeuring en vyandigheid onder medegeleewiges. Dit oor 'n saak wat die saligheid raak nie, en nie grondliggend is aan die verstaan of uitdra van die Evangelie nie.

Slot

In die lig van bogenoemde is dit ons hartgrondige versoek aan die Sinode om die saak in die toekoms oor te laat aan die plaaslike gemeentes, in lyn met ons Presbiteriale kerkregeringstelsel, waar die

stances

The two stances, as set out in this Report, rest on the Scriptural and hermeneutical perspectives in correspondence to the doctrine of the church as set out in points 6 and 7. The difference between the two stances is on the level of exegetic synthesis.

The matter of women in the special offices or not is not in itself a confessional matter and so (cf. 10.16.1 and 10.16.2) a decision in this regard should not threaten the unity of the churches (GKSA 2009:662 (digital edition)).

Other denominations

The CRCNA states the following on their website:

All congregations in the Christian Reformed Church in North America may allow women to serve in the office of minister, elder, deacon, or commissioned pastor. The CRC recognizes that there are two different perspectives and convictions on this issue, both of which honor the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God (for the biblical-theological argumentation undergirding the CRC's approach to this issue, see Agenda for Synod 2000, pp355-73; www.crcna.org/SynodResources).

We are aware of disagreement on this matter in a variety of Reformed Churches across the world (see above).

Beyond reasonable doubt

Clearly there is not agreement beyond reasonable doubt on the matter of WITO. The question then arises whether agreement on the matter of WITO should continue to be sought, when it cannot be argued beyond reasonable doubt for either an egalitarian or a complementary interpretation of Scripture. It leads to division and hostility among believers. This over a matter that does not affect salvation and is not fundamental to the interpreting or proclaiming the Gospel.

Conclusion

In light of above, it is our heartfelt wish that the Synod will in future leave the matter up to local congregations, in line with our Presbyterian church governance system, in which the Church Council acts to the benefit

Kerkraad optree tot beswil van die gemeente en uitbou van die Koninkryk van God.

of the congregation and the building of the Kingdom of God.

E. RAPPORT VAN DIE KOMMISSIE / REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

1. Sake waarvan die Sinode kennis neem

1.1 Dat die Sinode kennis neem van 1.1.

Besluit: Kennis geneem.

2. Sake waaroor die Sinode besluit

2.1 Die Kommissie beveel aan dat daar nie gevolg gegee word aan die Beskrywingspunt nie.

Motivering

2.1.1 Die beredenering van die Beskrywingspunt, dat die saak oor VIDA by die plaaslike Kerkraad tuis hoort, is by vele vergaderings van die Algemene Sinode afgewys (vgl. 2009, 2016). Die Kommissie verwys veral op Algemene Sinode 2016 se besluite:

a) "4.5 Beswaargrond 4

4.5.1 Beoordeling

4.5.1.1 Die Kommissie het daarop gewys dat, in die lig van KO, art 30, die saak van ouderling en predikant nie net 'n saak van die plaaslike kerk is nie (waarvan die Sinode net kennis geneem het). Omdat die Kommissie uitgewys het dat die plaaslike kerk nie alleen hieroor kan oordeel nie, het die Sinode derhalwe bloot kennis geneem van die voorstel.

4.5.1.2 Die vergadering, onder leiding van die Moderamen, reël die vergadering se werkswyse (KO, art 35)

Besluit: Punte 4.5.1.1 en 4.5.1.2 kennis geneem.

4.5.2 Aanbeveling

4.5.2.1 Beswaargrond 4 slaag nie

Besluit: Goedgekeur" (Acta 2016:70, 4.5).

b) "4.2.8.2 Die versoek deur die beswaardes dat plaaslike kerke self moet besluit of hulle vroue in die besondere dienste wil bevestig of nie, sal lei tot verdere verbreking van die eenheid binne die kerkverband (Ef 4:1-6). Daar moet binne die kerkverband gewaak word teen indepen-

1. Matters that the Synod take note of

1.1 That the Synod take note of 1.1.

Decision: Noted.

2. Matters that the Synod decide on

2.1 The Commission recommends that the Description point is not carried.

Motivation

2.1.1 The argumentation of the Description point, that the matter regarding the WITO resides with the local Church Council, was rejected by many meetings of the General Synod (cf 2009, 2016). The Commission refers in particular to the Extraordinary General Synod 2016's decisions:

a) "4.5 Basis for objection 4

4.5.1 Adjudication

4.5.1.1 The Commission points out that, in light of CO, art 30, the matter of elder and minister is not only a matter for the local church (of which the Synod only took note) Because of the fact that the Commission pointed out that not only the local church can decide on this, the Synod therefore only took note of this suggestion.

4.5.1.2 The meeting, under the leadership of the Moderamen, arranges the meeting's procedure (CO, art 35)

Decision: Points 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.1.2 noted.

4.5.2 Recommendation

4.5.2.1 Basis for objection 4 does not succeed.

Decision: Approved" (Acta 2016:70, 4.5).

b) "4.2.8.2 The request by the aggrieved that the local churches must decide for themselves whether they want to confirm women in the particular offices or not, will lead to further division within the church (Eph 4:1-6). Care should be taken within the church against independentism which

<p>dentisme wat die vrywillige binding aan tesame genome besluite prysgee (vgl KO, art 31)</p> <p>4.2.8.3 Die Kerkorde se eerste afdeling handel oor die dienste. Dit impliseer dat die ampte 'n wesentlike saak is wat alle kerke se kerkwees raak (KO, art 1).</p> <p>Besluit: Punte 4.1 tot 4.2.8.3 kennis geneem.</p> <p>4.3 Aanbeveling</p> <p>4.3.1 Die Beswaarskrif slaag in sy geheel nie.</p> <p>Besluit: Goedgekeur" (Acta 2016:133, 4.2.8).</p> <p>Besluit: Goedgekeur.</p>	<p>abandons the voluntary binding to joint decisions. (CO, art 31).</p> <p>4.2.8.3 The Church Order's first division deals with the services. This implies that the offices are an essential matter, and affects all forms of church life (CO, art 1).</p> <p>Decisions: Points 4.1 tot 4.2.8.3 noted.</p> <p>4.3 Recommendation</p> <p>4.3.1 The Petition of protest fails in its entirety.</p> <p>Decision: Approved" (Acta 2016:133, 4.2.8).</p> <p>Decision: Approved.</p>
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