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Our reference: 2021-013  
January 14, 2021

The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa  
Synod

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Copies:

Dear Brothers

**Re: Objection to article 44.19 from the Acts of the 39th Synod of the FRCSA (2017)**

While the church council was busy with the ratification of the acts of the synod, we received an objection against article 44 point 19. After further investigation we are convinced that this objection is valid and request of you to forward this to the next synod so that this decision can be recalled or reformulated on the 40th synod to be held, God willing, in 2021.

**Insake: Beswaar teen artikel 44.19 uit die acta van die 39<sup>ste</sup> sinode van die VGKSA (2017)**

*Terwyl ons as kerkraad besig was met die ratifikasie van die sinodehandelinge, het ons i.v.m. punt 19 van artikel 44 'n beswaar ontvang. Na verdere ondersoek is ons oortuig daarvan dat die beswaar gegrond is en versoek ons julle om die aan die sinode deur te stuur sodat hierdie besluit op die 40ste sinode (DV in 2021) herroep of herformuleer kan word.*

**Article 44.19 (Art.44 - Deputies for Relation with Churches Abroad)**

19. That a call to a minister from the RCNL can only be extended after first gaining concurring advice from a classis within the FRCSA. This should not be confused with the *colloquium doctum*, which should take place after a call has been extended and accepted.

Grounds:

- 19.1. The FRCSA should protect themselves from teachings and influences that are undermining the authority of Scripture, as we hold it, and the well-being of our own congregations.

- 19.2. This is in line with decisions by the CanRC Synod Dunnville 2016.

**Exposition of the objection**

The phrase *“That a call to a minister from the RCNL can only be extended after first gaining concurring advice from a classis within the FRCSA”* implies that the classis must approve such a call before the call can be extended. This goes against art.83 and arts.5 & 6 of our C.O. In art.83 we read *“No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, and no office bearer shall in any way lord it over other office-bearers.”* In arts.5&6 the calling of a proponent and a serving minister is addressed. In both these articles we read *“... by the consistory with the deacons, with the co-operation of the congregation, and in observance of the regulations in local use.”* For congregation without a minister we read *“Churches which have no minister in office shall extend a call after having received advice from the counsellor who has been appointed for this purpose by the classis.”* (Art.5) Thus, according our CO, the classis is already

involved with the finalising of the call, but only **after** the congregation has extended the call. No “concurring advice” is required beforehand. Before the calling only the counsellor is involved with giving advice.

Without doubt this decision was made with the best of intentions. Also, if the classis would serve us with advice, we won't have a problem with that. But we are convinced that the synod has exceeded its authority by making this decision. This decision undermines the authority of the local consistory who are, according to Biblical guidelines, the highest authority in the church of Christ. Article 31 of our CO is therefore applicable in this situation: “The decision which is taken by a majority vote shall be accepted as binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.”

### ***Uiteensetting van die beswaar***

*Die sinsnede* “That a call to a minister from the RCNL can only be extended after first gaining concurring advice from a classis within the FRCSA” *interpreteer ons as 'n besluit wat as 'n dwingende opdrag opgelê word en nie as advies bedoel is nie, d.w.s. die klassis moet toestemming gee voordat die beroep uitgebring word. Hierdie besluit druis direk in teen art.83 en arts.5&6 van ons K.O. In artikel 83 staan “Geen kerk mag oor ander kerke, en geen ampsdraer oor ander ampsdraers, op watter manier ook al, heers nie.” Artikels 5&6 handel oor die beroeping van 'n proponent en dienende predikant. In beide gevalle lees ons dat die beroeping “... deur die kerkraad en die diakens, met medewerking van die gemeente en met inagneming van die plaaslike reëling” geskied. Vir die kerke sonder 'n predikant geld dat die “beroeping plaasvind met advies van die konsulent wat deur die klassis aangewys is.” (Art.5) Die klassis is, volgens ons KO, betrokke by die finalisering van 'n beroep, maar eers **nadat** die plaaslike gemeente 'n beroep uitgebring het. Dus geen toestemming (“concurring advice”) word vooraf benodig nie. Slegs die konsulent is reeds voor die tyd daarby betrokke met die gee van advies.*

*Sonder twyfel is die hierdie besluit met die beste bedoelings gemaak. Ons het ook nie 'n probleem daarmee as die klassis advies sou gee nie. Ons is wel vas van mening dat daar 'n grens met hierdie besluit oorskry is waartoe die sinode nie geregtig is nie. Dit ondermyn die gesag van die plaaslike kerkraad, wat volgens Bybelse riglyne nog steeds die hoogste gesag in die kerk van Christus op aarde is. Daarom dink ons dat KO artikel 31 hier van toepassing is: “Die uitspraak wat met meerderheid van stemme aanvaar is, sal as bindend aanvaar word, tensy daar bewys word dat dit in stryd is met die Woord van God of met die Kerkorde.”*

May our heavenly Father grant you all, the classis, deputies and the synod, the wisdom to handle this case in a responsible manner.

*Dit is ons bede dat ons hemelse Vader vir julle almal, die klassis, deputate en die sinode, wysheid sal gee om ook hierdie saak op 'n verantwoordelike wyse te hanteer.*

On behalf of the consistory

*Namens die kerkraad*



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