

Address Reverend P. Verhoeff – general synod 23rd April 2009

Members of the general synod,

Let me start with the most important.

I very much want to thank you for the confidence you just pronounced in me. That is not insignificant to experience.

I am a church-boy, I love the church devotedly.

And I think it an enormous honour that you as a synod entrust me with this task.

I still have a lot to learn, that goes without saying. And I have not asked Reverend De Fijter, but that will probably never end.

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity for that. And I want to promise that I will do everything in my power not to shame your confidence. You may count on that.

What else may you count on?

It is not appropriate for me to speak big words. Fortunately our synod and the church she manages is a train that has been going for a long time and that will not just go into another direction because of a new chairman.

But if there is something that will be of importance in the years to come, it will be that there will be quality provided from this assembly. The church stands or falls with it. You may hold me responsible for that – that quality – but I will also hold you responsible. Let us hold each other to that.

I said I did not want to speak big words and I want to stick by that promise. But if I may extract one thing that is on the agenda of the synod, that would be the missionary work of the church.

You may write that down, that is what my heart beats for.

Hendrik Kraemer – the great missionary theologian – said:

The church is not *into* mission, the church *is* mission.

Mutatis mutandis that still goes, or rather more than ever.

It is indissoluble part from the church that you are generous and share what you have. Even if you have to rethink over and over how you can approach the other.

And also without the increase of membership as only objective.

What you want to share is not described in the same way by everyone.

That is the church in cool reality.

But we also share something in the church, and that is that imagination is here in power.

And then I mean that there is more than this.

More than we see and do and think.

Yes, even that there is a God who carries this world.

Finding new ways to be generous with that. That is the great challenge for the church.

During the past years I myself have experienced that in Alkmaar, that if you start trying, then it appears to be working.

A brave church, not afraid to be surprising.

A church that stands by what she says and that does what she believes.

In short a church where imagination is in power.

That is what I want to work on with you.