

UNITY TALKS – DRC FAMILY

6-8 NOVEMBER – ACHTERBERG CONFERENCE CENTRE

THE CHURCH THE RCA WANTS TO SEE

There will be many voices that we hear, but we need to distinguish which one is the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to see:

- A church that listens for what God is saying and obeys
- A church by its biblical preaching / teaching and example opens the spiritual eyes of unbelievers and turns them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, **so that unbelievers may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ.** (Acts 26:18)
- A church that can truly be the light and salt of the world, that has the conviction to call sin a sin – not to compromise biblical standards and truths.
- A church that will not loose our testimony and witness at a time of increasing wickedness. At a time when the love for God in many are growing cold. (Matt. 24:12)
- A church that we will not have an outward form of religion but no power of the Holy Spirit. A church that is not ungodly (2 Tim.3:1-5)
- A church that will preach the Word of God to correct, rebuke and encourage in a time when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, gather around them a great multitude of teachers to say what their itching ears wants to hear. (2 Tim. 4: 2-3)
- A church that honours God above every dream / ideology
- A church that is truly under the Lordship of Jesus Christ
- A church that will walk the narrow road and not the wide road that is easy that many choose but leads to death. (Matt. 7: 13-14)
- A church that preaches repentance of sin, iniquities and trespasses – for there is no salvation without repentance
- A church where its members are living in a Christian relation with God on a daily basis.
- A church that will do the will of God the Father – for not all who say Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but they that do the will of God.
- A church that will contend for the faith against formalism / legalism / traditionalism.
- A church that will not misrepresent God in word or deed by accepting what God rejects or rejecting what God accepts.

Brief History of RCA

The RCA originally began as a formal mission by the DRC and informally mission work was done by DRC members among the Indian people.

The DRC in the Cape province appointed Dr. Gerdener in 1916 to minister to the Muslim community in Cape Town. There were many others who followed later. Rev. D J Pypers was appointed in 1960 to work with the Muslim ministry and the Indian community at large.

Elsewhere spontaneous mission outreaches were gaining momentum that led to congregations being established in the Cape, Transvaal and Natal.

On 27 August 1968 ministers / delegates elders of four Indian congregations and representatives of the DRC met at Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg for our first Synod. In 1970 Rev. EJ Manikam became our first Indian minister.

In 1976 a strong decision was taken in favour of unity with the DRC family. In fact a decision was taken to join the then NG Sending Kerk, but this was never carried out.

The 1980's saw our church take a strong stand against controversial issues like the mixed marriages act, Immorality act, detention without trial, and the group areas act.

Before the next synod, the RCA was torn by politics. The Tvl presbytery began to advocate cutting ties with the DRC. The RCA lost four of its ministers in this period.

Two congregations left the RCA, taking along the assets and buildings. The RCA suffered grievous losses, particularly in leadership.

Rev. G Moodley and his family were forced to leave their congregation in this process. They began to build a new congregation in Palmridge and now have a building and successful work for the glory of God.

Its many years now but the pain and scars of this difficult period is still felt at times – **we don't want a repeat of this.**

In 1990 church unity was again discussed at length. A mandate was given by Synod to pursue discussions multilaterally.

We recognise that we have a responsibility to the DRC Family, to our congregations, to the unsaved and above all to our God.

At no time will we compromise the biblical standards that will affect our mission and ministry – gambling, alcoholism traditional worship, homosexuality, etc.

In our last Synod (2006), there was a call to suspend unity talks until more clarity is given on issues that will have a negative impact on our witness in our communities. We have however decided to continue with talks – to place before our DRC family our concerns and only possibly unite when these issues are made crystal clear to us.

Therefore in this regard we decided to continue with unity talks with the proviso that we have in place an opt out clause should we feel that our ministry and convictions are being compromised.

We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Our witness and testimony in our context could make or break the success of the Gospel. We don't want to lose the saltiness in the RCA or else we will become useless – only fit to be trampled upon. We have drawn up the Laudium Declaration (attached) to express our evangelical stand. This reads as follows:

We wish to state at this time that the RCA distances itself from any call to give same sex marriages equal status.

May I share some insights concerning our work which is predominately among Hindu and Muslim people but also people of other race groups. You understand that this situation exists because of our geographic location and not due to any prejudice to other people.

May I on behalf of the RCA ask you to understand where we come from and our convictions regarding scripture. At no time do we want to claim or be super spiritual or “holier than thou”. At no time do we want to create such an impression or impose our convictions upon you

The Hindu and Muslim to whom we share the gospel are people who have had centuries of a belief system in a god. They have scriptures, teachings and discipline in practicing their particular faith religiously. For salvation they practice good works, abstaining from bodily pleasures and materialism. Hindus have about 390 million deities. They are committed by vows, spiritual and bloodline ties to these spirits. They are in generations of spiritual bondages. They are spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) and are in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many have demonic problems, sickness, misfortune, bondage to drugs, alcohol, gambling, marriage conflicts, etc and go to temples and spiritualists besides doctors for help. When all else fails, they are ready to receive the gospel. They come to the church for help, counselling and prayer for these afflictions. We have to counsel and pray for them, leading them to Jesus Christ the Lord.

They understand that as a Christian the standard one should live. They definitely will not expect me as a Christian to be involved in gambling, casino, lotto, and other vices and bondages or past spiritualities. They will not respect such a person or church. For us to be an effective witness and the way we understand the scriptures, we need to be separated from the world, its life-style, and influence – thereby not becoming a stumbling block to their salvation (Rom. chapter 14 & 15). We are in the world but not off this world.

When Hindus convert to Christianity, they expect freedom from the said bondages and lifestyle of this world. Therefore our ministers, leaders, elders, and deacons have to lead by example. Our Synod accepted a guide for potential leaders (attached).

1 Jn 2:6If anyone is in Christ, they should walk like Christ. Therefore they must grow up to the fullness of Christ

2 Tim 2: 19-22 As a Christian we are called to turn away from our wickedness

Titus 2:11 ff We must say no to ungodliness and worldly passion

From the very beginning the RCA has resisted these worldly habits and life-styles and have not compromised its stand against worldliness, idolatry, ungodliness, etc.

Now with this unity process, we see a risk of these very things coming into our midst.

For us organic unity is like the gift of the Trojan horse. There is danger in the belly to our witness

A large catering for all beliefs / understandings, etc will definitely not enhance our work. To make an impact we must be holy and separated so that the Holy Spirit can use us effectively.

Eph. 5:27 states that Christ is coming for a radiant church – without stain, wrinkle or any other blemish – but holy and blameless, and this is the kind of church our ministry is aiming to achieve.

Matt. 7: 21 states that not all who say Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of God. Our task as the DRC family is to discover the will of God

As the RCA, we want to do God's will – to live separated lives from the world and its influence that will hinder our ministry. We want to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to a dying sinful world.

We plead with you our family to be sensitive and understanding of our particular context and ministry.

**Delivered by Rev. Bennett Shunmugam
Moderator of RCA
7 November 2006**