# A Great Multitude One Can Count

A Statistical Study on the Spatio-Temporal Development of the Reformed Denominations in the Netherlands Between 1892 and 2015

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#### THEOLOGISCHE UNIVERSITEIT VAN DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND TE KAMPEN

# A Great Multitude One Can Count A Statistical Study on the Spatio-Temporal Development of the Reformed Denominations in the Netherlands Between 1892 and 2015

# ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

### TER VERKRIJGING VAN DE GRAAD VAN DOCTOR IN DE THEOLOGIE,

## OP GEZAG VAN DE RECTOR DR. R. KUIPER

### ZO GOD WIL IN HET OPENBAAR TE VERDEDIGEN

## OP VRIJDAG 11 FEBRUARI 2022

## OM 15.00 UUR IN DE NIEUWE KERK,

## BROEDERWEG 34 TE KAMPEN

door

# Maria Johanna Wijma Geboren 19 augustus 1993 te Tilburg

Promotores	prof. dr. G. Harinck prof. dr. J. Rouwendal (VU Amsterdam)
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This study was sponsored by Stichting Afbouw

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ISBN: 978-94-6369-180-2 (Engelstalige editie) ISBN: 978-94-6369-168-0 (Nederlandstalige editie) © 2022 Merijn Wijma Vormgeving: Buijten & Schipperheijn Illustratie omslag: iStock.com/Binkski

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# Preface

The past four years in which I wrote this dissertation have been very eventful. I moved twice, from Zwolle to Kampen and then to Zaandam. I started two new jobs; first working at the Praktijkcentrum (which later became Kerkpunt), but then found a job as the national archivist of the Archive and Documentation Centre (ADC) of the *Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt* in Kampen, and later started as an editor at the publishing company Buijten & Schipperheijn in Amsterdam. But most importantly: I met a fantastic man in this period and we are now happily married.

In this period, my dissertation has been a very constant factor. Digging into the dataset, analysing data, solving puzzles to nicely sort the data, and of course writing and rewriting the text. I have not been bored for one moment. I was asked to write this dissertation by Mees te Velde. He had been working on a dataset containing membership numbers of Reformed denominations since the seventies, now kept by the ADC, and had been looking for somebody to describe and use them for multiple years. He then asked me. This book is the result of my exploration of this dataset: a description and analysis of all the numbers that have been made available in the yearbooks that have been published throughout the years by multiple denominations. This was not without its challenges: moral objections, paper shortages and war have caused multiple years of missing data. Still this book has become a nice whole. A valuable book that may be of help to theologians, church leaders and other interested people and parties. I hope this research can help to test the stories about church growth and decrease that we know from anecdotes, gut feelings and the like. The interdisciplinary and empirical approach of this book may inspire many other (practical) theologians and scientists of religion.

In my research, I have been helped by many people. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors George Harinck and Jan Rouwendal for their insight, knowledge and skilled guidance. I am not myself a theologian, historian or statistician, but they gave me the exact help I needed, while respecting me as an independent academic. I also want to thank co-supervisor Mees te Velde, who invited me to do this research and who has helped me with his meticulous and precise feedback on my text. In the beginning stages of this research, I was also given a lot of guidance by Peter Mulder, then spatial economist at the Vrije Universiteit, who helped me to order the data and to learn how to use Stata (statistical software). Floris Wagenaar has been of great assistance in checking and re-checking the data on the Gereformeerde Bond. In the writing process, I received a lot of aid from Chris Janse, who with his enormous knowledge of the Reformed world has made my text more accurate and who has done some very good detective work to give more clarity to some aspects of the research. Similarly, Frans Rozemond and Pieter van den Boogaard have helped me out in answering some of the questions that arose during my work with the dataset.

Finally, I want to thank my family. My husband, Marten Wybe van der Veen, who is always there for me and has supported me emotionally and academically throughout the process, my parents Ada de Meij and Hayo Wijma, who have always motivated me to try the things I did not know I could do, and my sister and brother-in-law Hilde Wijma and Arjan Engbers who are always there for me and have a very matter of fact view on stressful situations.

After all this, I hope you enjoy reading this book.

Merijn Wijma Zaandam, 11 november 2021 Part I Introduction

# 1. Introduction

The Protestant denominations in the Netherlands have a long and rich tradition and history. They are a result of the Reformation and have been founded, grown, shrunk, split, merged, and survived time. As an unmistakable part of Dutch society, their formerly incontestable position has changed in recent years, but they nevertheless remain a notable presence. Of particular interest here is a specific branch of the broad group of Protestant churches, namely those that call themselves *Gereformeerd*. Twelve denominations of this type are currently in existence. What sets them apart is that they all adhere to three confessional forms: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt. The content of these symbols define *Gereformeerd* faith, which is why they are often referred to as the "Three Forms of Unity," distinguishing *Gereformeerd* faith from other religions. Based on the teachings of Calvin, their founding father, the members of these denominations try to live responsible lives, towards both God and society.

The aim of the present study is to describe this group – not their history in particular, nor their theological background, but a more prosaic aspect of their existence: their statistical development. Recently, a dataset has become available containing statistical information from several *Gereformeerde* denominations for each local church, for each year. The source of these data are the annual yearbooks published by the different denominations containing contact information, reports on the past year's events, and, more importantly for this study, statistical information on the local congregations. In my study, the membership numbers, demographic statistics, border traffic, and geographical distribution of eight different denominations or groups will be described and analysed for the years 1892-2015. After they have been described, an attempt will be made to explain the trends.

The occasion for this research project is the general consensus that churches in the Netherlands are changing; descriptions of and explanations for these changes have been treated, but to date they had not been connected to the statistical evidence in a systematic and comprehensive manner. The changes have rather been generally ascribed to the secularisation of modern society, that is, the disappearance of religion from all terrains of public life and a weakening of the church's position. The current standard in society is non-religiosity; to be religious is an exception and a way of life that demands explanation or defence. The largest part of modern society, then, at least in the western world, is entirely secular. A small group, however, still persists and maintains its belief in God and its specific way of life. The *Gereformeerde* denominations whose statistical development is the focus of this study all emphasise continuity between their current position and the Reformation, albeit in different ways.

An important difference from the past, however, is the fragmentation among believers. Having started out as a single denomination (i.e., the Catholic church),

the church in the Netherlands now numbers, depending on how one counts, roughly sixty different Christian denominations. There is thus some disunity in the Dutch church, to say the least. Of course, sixty denominations is too large a number to study within the scope of this project. Instead, the choice was made to study the twelve *Gereformeerde* denominations, which have all sprung from the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* (NHK), the church with a dominating position in the Netherlands from the seventeenth century onwards. The twelve current *Gereformeerde* denominations all issue from schisms and secessions starting in the nineteenth century. The large number of secessions and conflicts may give rise to worry. Are all Protestant denominations destined to split at some point in time? Is it impossible for churches to maintain unity? Janse (1985) seems to think that the larger a denomination is, the greater the room for heterogeneity, differing opinions, and, possibly, schisms (p. 47). Despite the disharmony within denominations and the large number of separations and schisms. Dutch Reformed denominations still persist. None of them have truly disappeared. If there are denominations that no longer exist as independent institutions anymore, this is because they have joined or merged with another denomination. This is in itself a remarkable aspect of the group of churches that will be studied.

# 1.1. Research questions

Based on available data and literature that I have consulted in the course of this research, I have developed the following main research question:

What does the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like, and how can it be explained?

This question is quite broad. The reason for this broad formulation is the plethora of information available to me, as well as my intention to give as exhaustive a description as possible, together with an analysis of the conclusions that will be drawn from those descriptions. For this reason, I will also use the following sub-questions:

- 1. What does the temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 2. What does the spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 3. How can the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 be explained?

At the very outset, it should be noted that in 1892, only two – and the precursors of a third – of the twelve denominations to be studied here were in existence, and that published statistical information is available for only one of them. In

the course of time, more denominations followed suit and started publishing information on their membership.

### 1.2. Structure of this research

To answer the questions formulated in the previous section, this study will be divided into parts, most of which in turn consist of several chapters.

**Part I**, as the opening of this study, will introduce the research and explain its background. This first chapter introduces the topic and will furthermore present a brief overview of the later parts. Chapter 2 describes the historical framework which will be used as a background to the analyses in the later parts. Chapter 3 offers a summary of the dataset and describes how the data were collected and organised. Finally, chapter 4 will explain the methods used to obtain the descriptions and analyses made in the rest of the work.

**Part II** will attempt to address the first sub-question on the temporal development of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. Each denomination will have its own chapter. These chapters will start with a description of membership numbers, and any changes that occur through the years will be accounted for and related to the history of the church in question. Next, all available demographic information relating to age, birth rates, and death rates will be presented, followed by a description of border traffic with other denominations, and the numbers of local churches and their average size.

**Part III** will address the spatial development of each denomination. Here I will present maps of where the members of each denomination live at different points in time, how this distribution has changed, where the denominations are the biggest, and where they are absent. The segregation and urbanisation of each denomination will also be examined and described.

**Part IV** will test and elaborate hypotheses based on the conclusions of parts II and III.

**Part V** is the concluding part. It will offer a summary of the findings, together with an evaluation of the research and recommendations for further research.

**The appendices** will include additional information and statistics that were used for the descriptions and analyses.

## 1.3. The place of this research in the academic field

The main research question as formulated above is wide and difficult to answer. In order to address it, we will to need to approach it from different angles and multiple disciplines. My research finds itself at the crossroads of religiography, sociology, economics, history, geography, and statistics. It is therefore necessary to explain why all these fields are involved, and why the six need to be combined here.

First of all, this work can be placed in the tradition of religiography, a discipline that was for some time practised in the Netherlands but has never really gained academic ground. Religiography is the geographical study of religion, and uses empirical methods to give a factual overview of the distribution and numbers of churches and their memberships. This field was pioneered by I.P. Kruijt, who in his 1933 work De onkerkelikheid in Nederland gave a comprehensive overview of the numbers of people who were not members of any church and analysed possible causes of this secularisation. Following his work, the next comparable publication did not appear until 1953-1962, when the seven-volume Handboek pastorale sociologie, edited by W. Banning, appeared. These volumes examined the history, and socio-economic, political, and ecclesial relations in the country. Since then, however, publications relating to religiography or religious geography have been few and far between, and Knippenberg (1992) was the last to place himself firmly in this tradition. In his *De religieuze kaart van Nederland*, he offered a full overview of the geographic distribution of different groups of religious people in the Netherlands throughout Dutch history, along with analyses of possible reasons for the observed patterns and an overview of the history of these groups in order to contextualise the changes that occurred. I would like to follow in the line of Knippenberg, and use statistical data to present an overview of the developments in membership numbers for different churches as well as maps with the distribution of these groups, along with a discussion of possible causes and notable phenomena.

Secondly, my research will be firmly entrenched in sociology, the study of the functioning and behaviour of society, and in particular the sociology of religion, which focuses on the place of religion within that society. The sources I will be using here focus on secularisation and on the sociological development of different denominations. One example is Dobbelaere (1981) and his seminal work in which he defines and explores the concept of secularisation. Taylor's (2007) work has also proved instrumental. Sociology is also the focal point of Dekker (1992, 2013), who places the historical development of Reformed churches within a national context, albeit with special attention to the interaction between church and society. Accordingly, he does not discuss larger developments like schisms and mergers, but restricts himself mostly to a description of the social and societal background to the changes happening within the churches.

Another work of interest is that by Janse (1985), who gives an elaborate account of secularisation and of how the church can respond to this phenomenon. He focuses on the stricter, experientialist churches in the Netherlands, and describes how they attempt to maintain their particular identity and their membership numbers by avoiding society. His discussion of persistence and assimilation is very interesting and proved useful for explaining some of the changes that occurred in the churches within the present dataset. Finally, also De Hart authored several publications for the *Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau* (SCP), describing the developments within churches in relation to the history of and sociological changes in Dutch society (SCP, 2004; De Hart, 2013).

Some sources from economics will also be used for the theoretical framework. These works mostly fall within the specific field of spatial economics and provided me with methodological support. Bisin and Verdier (2000), for instance, develop a framework for measuring the way religious values are transmitted between generations in relation to the influence of peers and role models on this process. Their model also serves to explain what happens to the socialisation process if the world in which the new generation grows up is more secular than their parents' world. Iannaconne (1992; 1994) has likewise conducted very useful research on the reasons for the growth of strict churches, in departure from the more liberal churches. A very different group of studies in economics on which this study will draw are sources on segregation. I suspect that some churches are more segregated than others, and the sources from this field have offered me the necessary tools to investigate this assumption (Waldorf, 1993; Dawkins, 2004).

History is the next field of interest, especially since the developments within the church can hardly be explained without knowledge of the history of Dutch society and of the denominations studied. These two historical facets will be taken into consideration when the research questions are addressed. Apart from general history, there will also be a strong focus on church history. The relevant sources include works by Endedijk (1990), who offers a description of different periods in the development of GKN history. He compares these to the history of Dutch society as a whole and places church history in the wider context of the Netherlands. Selderhuis's (2006) handbook is another source that describes church history within a national context. Van Middelkoop (2009) focuses solely on church history, and does not do so in pure chronological terms, but by telling the story of each separate denomination. These historical works show how Reformed people have developed, and will function as a basis for the descriptions of the churches in the later parts of this study.

My research will also have a strong geographical component to it. In part III, I will give an extensive spatial description of the distribution and segregation of the denominations under study, as well as an analysis of the way they relate to urbanisation. The reason for this is that there are strong indications suggesting that churches in the Netherlands are highly location-specific. There are typical places where specific denominations are largest, as well as places where they are generally absent (Knippenberg, 1992). A famous example of this is the Dutch Bible belt, a patch of land running from Zeeland all the way up to the north-western parts of Overijssel. Members of experientialist churches are found almost exclusively in these parts of the country. The relationship between secularisation and urbanisation is another one that has been pointed to on many occasions. Cities, with their fast, future-oriented network structures, are no place for religion to flourish. That happens more in calm, stable rural areas. In the footsteps of Knippenberg (1992), I will present maps of where the various churches are present and of how the geographical distribution has developed over time.

Finally, my study carries a strong emphasis on statistics. It is based on a dataset containing information on annual membership figures for every local church in each of eight denominations. With this information, I can offer an overview of the development of membership numbers, together with the proportion of confessing members to baptised members, giving us some indication of the age range of the churches. Next to this information, there are also demographic statistics available; deaths, births, confessions, and incoming and outgoing traffic. Together, these data should offer a good overview of the statistical history of each church. Interestingly, to date no real statistical analysis of church membership has been published. One possible explanation for this failure is that statistical descriptions of a given sub-population are usually the field of sociologists, historians, and geographers, whereas theology is firmly grounded in the humanities, a field of academia that has typically not shown itself most interested in numbers and statistics. However, my sense is that the combination of approaches is warranted, since a sound statistical, descriptive work can represent exactly the kind of basis historical, sociological, and geographical works can use.

Another possible reason why nothing like my study has appeared to date is that the data are only now available in their current form. Formerly, the only available information came from Statistics Netherlands (CBS), an organisation that provides statistical information on the Netherlands and held censuses roughly every ten years from 1795 to 1971, after which it stopped. The CBS data are also subjective; participants were asked for their religion and church membership. As it turns out (Advokaat, Prak, & Te Velde, 2007), people were often not entirely sure of the name of their denomination, leading to certain statistical errors. The CBS still publishes information on degree of religiosity, but the interval between measurements has increased and become less consistent than used to be the case when it still held censuses. Moreover, apart from non-religious, the CBS distinguishes only five religious groups: Catholic, Protestant, Hervormd, Gereformeerd, and Other. As the group of Gereformeerden, who used to constitute 10% of the total Dutch population until 1975, now only makes up 3% (CBS, 2018a), the lack of detail is unsurprising. However, for a long time the CBS data represented the only data available, and they gave rise to very useful publications such as that of Knippenberg (1992) and the publications God in *Nederland*, which appear every ten years and discuss the spiritual state of the Netherlands (Bernts & Berghuis, 2016). Kaski, a research institution affiliated with the Radboud University in Nijmegen, focuses on religion and society in particular, but also collects data on denominations. These collections, however,

are aimed mostly at the Roman Catholic Church and the PKN, and they do not specify any *Gereformeerde* denominations.

My research will combine factors of the works mentioned above. Its relevance is that methods and knowledge from all these fields of study will come together to create an analytical and explanatory whole; the statistical development of Reformed denominations will be embedded in their historical background, combined with data on the Dutch population.

My work represents a contribution to the literature describing religiosity in quantitative terms. Whereas the CBS, Kaski, Dekker, and Knippenberg base themselves on self-reported data on membership, my data come from the administrations of the churches themselves. These data were never available as a single integrated database that can be described and analysed in full. My study will become a kind of analytical atlas of the member distribution of different types of churches through the years, embedded in their respective histories.

My hope is that my work will also serve a more practical purpose. Reformed newspapers and magazines like the Nederlands Dagblad, Reformatorisch Daablad, Woord & Weg, etc., devote many articles to discussions on declining church membership and on ways to counteract this phenomenon. Often, however, these articles lack a strong empirical basis, simply because there are no reports available on the development of each denomination or on its current state compared to the rest of its history. Nevertheless, these publications are used to formulate advice and policies, even though the conclusions they present are not grounded in actual facts. My study aims to be of help in this respect, so that the conversation regarding Reformed people as a part of Dutch society may be held on the basis of precise statistics. The information that my research will make available may be used by anyone seeking data on the demographic and statistical context of the past and present. Therefore, upon completion the database will be made available for public use through the Data Archiving and Networked Services of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

## 1.4. Scope definition

In this section, we will define several terms that are used multiple times in this study and also set limitations on its scope.

In the first place, the present study deals with Protestant denominations of the *Gereformeerde (Reformed)* type. Even though this is a small group, making up at most 10% of the Dutch population between 1880 and 1975 and 3% in 2017 (CBS, 2018a), it is also a varied group and one deserving of attention. The church denominations that will be described in detail in this study are the following:

- *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN) [Reformed Churches in the Netherlands]
- Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK) [Christian Reformed Churches]
- Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt (GKv) [Reformed Churches Liberated]
- *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* (NGK) [Netherlands Reformed Churches]
- Gereformeerde Gemeenten (GG) [Reformed Congregations]
- *Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland* (GGN) [Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands]
- Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK) [Restored Reformed Church]
- *Gereformeerde Bond in de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* (GB) [Reformed Association in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands]

The Dutch abbreviations above will be used for these churches in the remainder of this study, since the names are too long to spell out in full each time and since the English abbreviations will be alien to many readers. A complete list of abbreviations is included in Appendix D.

The denominations listed here are all churches or groups that adhere to the three Forms of Unity already mentioned above for their organisation and teachings. Even though the HHK does not have the adjective *Gereformeerd* but *Hervormd* in its name, it meets the definition of a *Gereformeerde* church by its adherence to the three Forms of Unity.

More unusual in the above list is the GB, since it is not an actual denomination but an association within a denomination, namely the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK), which after a merger in 2004 became the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN). The NHK had been roughly divided into five "modalities": liberal, middle orthodox, evangelical, confessional, and Hervormd-Gereformeerd (GB). In 2004, the former GKN united with the NHK. The liberal and evangelical wings of the resulting PKN would not consider themselves Gereformeerd, but things are less clear for the middle orthodox wing and even more so for the confessional wing, in that a part of these modalities may still adhere to the three Forms of Unity. Furthermore, identifying the membership of these middle orthodox and confessional groups is even more difficult than it is for the GB, let alone making an accurate estimate of their size. In 2011, De Jong and Kregting mapped the modalities of the PKN, concluding that 26% of PKN members identify as confessional, 16% as GB, and 20% as middle orthodox (*Trouw*, 9 september 2011). Unfortunately, these numbers are not sufficiently detailed to include the confessional wing in my study. As will become evident below, the problems associated with the construction of a reliable estimate for the size of the GB were themselves already substantial.

The order in which the denominations appear above will be maintained throughout this study. They are divided into two groups: the first four churches are referred to as "orthodox" and the second set of four are "experientialist" (see paragraph 2.3 below for this classification). Within these sets, the denominations are listed chronologically in order of institution. Once again, the GB forms an exception in this respect; even though it is not the youngest member of the second group, it has been listed last because it has several characteristics that it does not share with other denominations (as noted above), and because data for this group were difficult to collect and least accurate (see paragraph 3.2 for discussion).

Although this study aims at an overview of all *Gereformeerde* churches, it is impossible to be complete. As the reader may have noticed, five of the twelve total *Gereformeerde* denominations – the GB does not qualify as such – are absent from the list because they do not publish membership statistics. The Oud Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland (OGG) are the oldest and largest of these, often estimated at 15,000-20,000 members, comparable to the GGN. The OGG can be characterised as experiential, like the GG and GGN, to which they are closely related. The Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland (buiten verband) represent a much smaller entity, but belong to the same group. For the sake of completeness, we also need to mention the existence of a number of independent congregations with a clearly experientialist character but have no denominational affiliation. As to the churches characterised as orthodox, three small denominations were established after 2000: the Voortgezette Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (which issued from the GKN in 2004), De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (which issued from the GKv in 2003), and the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (which issued from the GKv in 2009). These have been left out of this study due to their small size and the paucity of available information, due in most cases to the fact that they do not publish yearbooks.

This study deals with denominations in the Netherlands only. If they do have local congregations in other countries, these have not been included in the dataset. Since information on the GKN is available from 1892, that year functions as the starting point for our study. Data collection ends for the year 2015 in order to prevent chaos from the addition of data during writing. Writing was completed in 2019, so that any important developments after that year have not been included.

# 2. Historical framework

In this chapter, I provide some historical background to the denominations in the dataset I am using, containing the data from the yearbooks published by the denominations, as explained in the Introduction. This dataset will henceforth be referred to as the "Kampen dataset". I will start with a brief overview of Dutch church history from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, followed by a description of the current ecclesial landscape in the Netherlands, a characterisation of the *Gereformeerde* denominations in our dataset, and, finally, a brief historical sketch for each of them. The purpose is to give the reader a general impression; authoritative histories are available elsewhere.

## 2.1. Dutch church history

Back in 1849, the first year for which the CBS has easily accessible statistics, almost every Dutch citizen belonged to a church. About 40% of the population was Roman Catholic, and about 60% Protestant (CBS, 2018a), some small religious minorities, like the Jews, excluded. It was highly unusual for someone not to be a member of any church, although membership was often only a formal matter, as newborn children in many cases became members almost by default. That is, while newborns had to be baptized, this happened even if the parents were not active as church members. In his discussion of religiosity in medieval Europe, Everton shows that even though membership was common, religiosity – commonly defined as church attendance and active participation – was not necessarily that high (2018, p. 5-13).

In the course of the nineteenth century, the NHK, as the largest Protestant church to which more than 50% of the population belonged, began to splinter. The NHK community fell apart into different groups; many accepted the changes in church government and the new adjective *Hervormd* introduced in 1816, while another group was reluctant to accept changes in adherence to the Reformed confessions and in church government and preferred the older adjective Gereformeerd. Etymologically, the two adjectives are similar, and it is impossible to distinguish them in English. However, the difference between the two groups was very clear to all those involved. The Gereformeerden disagreed with the *Hervormden* on government involvement in the church and wished to return to the classical Reformed identity. These differences led to the Secession (Afscheiding) of 1834, which the government initially suppressed. After freedom of religion was granted more explicitly to all in 1848, an increasing number of churches or denominations emerged over time, especially within the Gereformeerde tradition. Gereformeerde denominations have similar characteristics as to doctrine and practices, many of them related to the three Forms of Unity (i.e., the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, and the Heidelberg Catechism).

Shared values include adherence to the Bible as interpreted in the historical Reformed tradition, an emphasis on the personal experience of faith and conversion, and a presbyterian form of church government. The NHK stood in the same tradition, but its nature as a people's church (*volkskerk*) meant that all Protestants were members by default. Combined with doctrinal positions varying from orthodox Reformed to liberal, this led to difference in involvement of its members and also to a plurality of religious practices. The NHK was tolerant and did not enforce specific dogmatic stances or administer doctrinal discipline. In addition, the NHK had a more hierarchal church order, with an emphasis on the national structure of the church over the authority of local congregations (see also the difference in the names of the denominations: Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (singular) and Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (plural)).

In the course of the nineteenth century, Dutch society became "pillarised" and continued to be so well into the twentieth century. Different societal groups – liberals, socialists, Protestants, Catholics – voted for specific political parties, supported specific broadcasting corporations, and established their own schools, unions, magazines, newspapers, etc., with the idea that churches and their members as well as adherents of other worldviews should all have the freedom to express their convictions in society and to maintain their own teachings and traditions in the public domain. All the *Gereformeerde* denominations treated in this study formed a part of the Protestant pillar, although they sometimes had their own specific organisations or even sub-pillars.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the large pillars started to disappear. This process was to a considerable degree the result of the diminishing importance of religion or worldview as a defining factor in the organization of public life and the related decline of group cultures. The new core values were individual opinion and self-fulfilment. Related to this change, a new, more individual attitude towards ethical issues developed in departure from the dominant group morality, for instance with respect to marriage and divorce, the place of women in society, warfare, homosexuality, and abortion. More liberal views on these issues were hard to reconcile with traditional Christian teachings. The *Gereformeerde* denominations responded to the related challenges in different ways, and in some cases their answers also changed over time. This dialogue with a changing societal environment is important as the background to the dynamics in the data analysed.

To some extent, at least, the developments in the period under study can be regarded as a continuation of those in the nineteenth century, where liberalism was a driving force behind new developments in society and theology and caused fierce opposition from the *Gereformeerden*, who nevertheless accepted some of the innovations, while retaining their reservations with respect to others and experiencing difficulties maintaining unity in the course of this dynamic process.

Modernisation and secularisation developed in the Netherlands from the late nineteenth century onwards. Innovation, and acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural and religious differences, as well as the importance of the individual and his or her freedom, together with increased mobility and more options for (long-distance) communication, have changed Dutch society (Stoffels, 1995, p. 36; SCP, 2004, p. 5). The church is no longer the default go-to for social facilities and has become just one option among others for organising and fulfilling one's practical and social needs. Religion has come to be absent from public spaces and is not a given in economic, political, social, and cultural spheres. Going hand in hand with these developments is the general decrease of church membership (Taylor, 2007, p. 2-3). Although churches remain and still form a notable minority in the Netherlands, they now have to navigate a society that is less accommodating than it used to be. It is fair to say that the position of churches - and de *Gereformeerde* denominations are no exception in current society is more complicated than it was in 1849, when church membership was the standard. The Gereformeerde denominations are now located at the margins of society, and its members experience notable differences between common sense in society and the Christian norms propagated in their churches. This causes some, usually tacit, pressure for assimilation and conformity. The tension between adherence to traditional opinions and modes of behaviour that used to be common in the Netherlands until the 1960s or so and were often accepted as being in agreement with biblical teaching, and those that are self-evident for many modern secular members of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Dutch society, is an important background to the dynamics of church membership documented in this study.

# 2.2. The Dutch ecclesial landscape

When it comes to the current ecclesial landscape in the Netherlands, at the time of writing (2019), half of the Dutch population (totalling 17 million people) is religious (CBS, 2018a), defined as being a member of a church. The Christian churches in the Netherlands roughly fall into the following four categories:

*Catholic:* The Roman Catholic Church currently has roughly four million members. The largest share of Dutch Catholics can be found in Limburg and Noord-Brabant, but also in parts of eastern Gelderland and Overijssel, especially Twente and the Achterhoek, and in patches of Noord- and Zuid-Holland and Utrecht. However, since people in those regions become members almost by default, many are not actually practising members. Apart from the more wide-spread Roman Catholic Church, there are also a number of Old Catholic churches in the Netherlands.

**Protestant**: The distinction between *Hervormd* and *Gereformeerd*, which first emerged in the nineteenth century, has become much less visible in the Netherlands ever since the NHK, the GKN (as largest *Gereformeerde* denomination), and the Evangelical Lutheran church (ELK) merged to form the *Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* (PKN) [Protestant Church in the Netherlands]. The PKN currently has 1.9 million members, but, as with the Roman Catholic Church, many are member in name only. It is not clear how many members in the PKN are actively involved in church life.

**Reformed**: As noted above, the *Hervormde* church technically no longer exists. A small part of it has continued in the HHK, composed of NHK congregations that refused to join the PKN at its establishment. However, there are still plenty of *Gereformeerde* churches, which have split from or never joined with the GKN. These churches base their identity uniquely on the three Forms of Unity. Nevertheless, they are rather divided, as will become increasingly clear in the remainder of this study. The "Reformed" churches are therefore the eight churches listed in section 1.4, with two exceptions: (1) the GKN, which fused with the NHK in 2004 and are now part of the PKN; and (2) the GB, which has always been a part of the NHK (and, later, the PKN). Otherwise stated, while the term *Gereformeerd* indicates a Protestant sub-type, not all *Gereformeerde* churches in the Netherlands" (PKN). The only churches in the Kampen dataset that are part of the PKN are the GKN and the GB.

*Evangelical*: The evangelical churches form a very large group of churches. It is difficult to give a clear indication of its membership, since so many different groups, churches, and movements are involved, and since they rarely keep track of statistics. Evangelicalism has come mostly from the Anglo-Saxon world, in particular from revivalism, which generated a new or renewed interest in the church or spiritual life.

The CBS (2016) has statistical information on most of the churches mentioned above, excluding the evangelicals, as data collection there is not quite in order. The CBS data are based on the decennial censuses held until 1971, and after that year on annual surveys on the Dutch labour force and demographic background. This explains why the lines in figure 2.1 become less straight beginning in 1971, as there is more information available for the later years. People were asked in the censuses and the following research done by the CBS if they considered themselves religious, and if so, to identify the church denomination with which they were affiliated. The temporal development in statistics on church membership and non-religious people can be presented in the following figure:



Figure 2.1. All churches as % of the Dutch population (CBS, 2016)

Figure 2.1 shows that overall, the share of church members in the Dutch population has decreased notably since 1849. Starting at a reported 100% (which number is nevertheless contested), it drops to 50% by 2015, with rising numbers of people unaffiliated with any church. The NHK saw a rather sudden decrease in the 1880s, while the Roman Catholic Church long stayed stable. By 1930, the share of Catholic church members becomes higher than that of NHK members, and even sees some growth until the 1970s, when membership begins to decline. The Gereformeerde church (GKN) grew from 1% in 1849 to around 10% in 1889, by which time the churches originating from the Afscheiding (1834) had grown substantially and the *Doleantie* (1886) had just taken place. From this time onwards, the GKN were a notable minority in the Dutch population. After the 1890s, however, their membership as a share of the Dutch population stabilised. It should be noted that the CBS does not distinguish between the GKN and other *Gereformeerde* denominations. This observation gains importance as secessions multiply over time. It is, nevertheless, clear from the diagram that the share of Gereformeerden in the Dutch population decreased after 1970, as will be discussed in much more detail later in this study. The final group of miscellaneous religions include other types of Protestants, such as Lutherans, Baptists, Remonstrants, as well as other religious groups, like the Jews, or non-Western religions, like Islam and Buddhism, which were introduced to the Netherlands by immigrants.

In addition, the CBS presents information on the geographical distribution of these types of churches, resulting in the following landscape (2016):



Figure 2.2. The presence and distribution of non-religious Dutch, Catholic Dutch, and Protestant Dutch per province in 2015

As figure 2.2 shows, non-religious people live mostly in Utrecht, Drenthe, and Noord-Holland, but Friesland, Flevoland, and Groningen are also fairly secular. Roman Catholics were still present predominantly in Limburg and Noord-Brabant, with many members in Overijssel and Gelderland as well. Protestants could be found living in Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Drenthe, Groningen, and, clearly, in Friesland. However, note that different scales were used for these maps. This is partly related to do the categories that the CBS uses; other than Protestant, it also has categories for *Gereformeerd* and *Hervormd*. The CBS seems still to include PKN members in these categories, even if they identify more as either *Gereformeerd* or *Hervormd* rather than PKN, which they technically are. The *Gereformeerde* category also includes a wide variety of churches, from liberal orthodox to strict experientialist, making it difficult to distinguish between their orientation.

An important difference between the various churches in figure 2.2 is their understanding of membership. This was one reason for limiting the present research to *Gereformeerde* denominations, as the Roman Catholic Church and the NHK differ significantly from them in the way one becomes a member. In the PKN and NHK, any child born to members, regardless of whether or not they are active, is registered as a member. These churches therefore have default membership, as children may be baptised as a formality and never attend church again after that event. The NHK even had a special category of membership, the so-called birth member, which it used for unbaptised children of parents who were baptised or confessing members. In the Roman Catholic Church,

too. children are often baptised even if their parents are not active members. In *Gereformeerde* denominations, by contrast, people actually have to be members, either by baptism, or else by public confession, which grants them admission to the Holy Supper. Church attendance is an important part of membership. This is true for most of the denominations examined in this study, with the exception of the HHK, which is a branch of the NHK and therefore works with the default membership model, and the GB, which is not a denomination and has no membership administration. As data collection for the GB relies on the NHK and PKN yearbooks, the default membership model applies also here (see section 3.1 for more information on the difficulties with GB data collection). It should therefore be kept in mind that membership numbers for the HHK and GB may be much more optimistic than for the other denominations. The same is true for other denominations as well, as members may be less active and not consider themselves members, even if the local administration does view them as such. This circumstance is most applicable to the orthodox churches in the dataset (the GKN, GKv, and NGK, and, to a certain degree, the CGK), but in some ways also to experientialist churches. However, as we already noted, the difference between church membership and attendance is much lower in the Gereformeerde denominations than it is in the RKK, NHK, and PKN.

One additional aspect that has to be mentioned here is the value of public confession of faith (openbare geloofsbelijdenis). All denominations in the Kampen dataset maintain a distinction between baptised members (*doopleden*) and confessing members (*belijdende leden*). It is only when baptised members do public confession of their faith in their local church that they become confessing members and gain admission to the Holy Supper. The age at which this happens, however, differs somewhat between the denominations. In orthodox churches, public confession is a more-or-less standard part of church life and is done by most members between the ages of eighteen and twenty, who may then attend the Holy Supper, after a program of instruction on church dogma, polity, and history lasting multiple years. Public confession also makes it possible for them to marry before the church and to have their children baptised. However, in these orthodox churches, the age at which young people do this is shifting. In the GKN, the decision to allow children to participate in the Holy Supper has made it much less urgent to become a confessing member. For the CGK, Vennik (2015) notes that the age is rising; it is rare for members to do confession before they are nineteen years old, and baptised members between twenty and thirty vears old are not uncommon. A similar development can be seen in the GKv and NGK, where the number of confessions is declining. Young church members are less inclined to do confession simply because it is expected of them at a certain, and rather want to make a conscious, autonomous decision (Evangelische Omroep, 2017).

The above changes are much less present in experientialist churches. Although attendance at the Holy Supper is an activity that is usually preceded by much contemplation and an uncertainty about whether one's faith is good enough to participate, public confession is seen much more as a given. The age of confession in these denominations has not been rising. In fact, in the most conservative church, the age of confession is lowest: in the GGN, the age is 20-21: in the GG, it is 21-22: and in the HHK, it is 23-24 (C.S.L. Janse, personal communication, February 8, 2021). The effect of these differences on the dataset is that we used the distinction between baptised members and confessing members to make an estimate of the average age of church members, assuming that baptised members are under the age of twenty and confessing members twenty or over. For experientialist churches, however, this age may be higher, as people tend to wait longer before doing confession. When people in experientialist churches do confession, this also does not automatically mean that they will attend Holy Supper, since participation once again depends on strict introspection. A similar shift can be observed in orthodox churches, where people wait longer before they do confession, or baptised members leave the church and never make public confession at all. These differences will frequently be referred to in the body of this study, since they heavily influence the way the statistics need to be interpreted.

#### 2.3. Classifying the denominations in the Kampen dataset

The classification of churches or religious groups is often convenient for doing research. Knippenberg (1992) divides the Netherlands into three religious groups: Catholics, Protestants, and liberal or non-religious people (p. 3). In the Protestant group, he includes all Protestant churches, from *Hervormd* to Lutheran to *Gereformeerd*. As has already been noted in section 2.2 above, I have first of all distinguished de *Hervormde* kerk from all *Gereformeerde* churches for the present study. The main reason for this is the notable difference between the statistical and historical development of the two, as is clear from figure 2.1. Whereas the NHK used to be the default church, the present-day *Gereformeerde* churches did not emerge until the first half of the nineteenth century. We are, therefore, dealing with a subset of Knippenberg's Protestant class, focusing only on *Gereformeerde* churches – and the GB – in the Netherlands.

Janse (1985) makes a distinction between orthodox and experientialist churches, devoting his work to the persistence or assimilation of the experientialist churches. According to him, the main distinction between these two groups has to do with *bevinding* (experientialism) and *bekering* (conversion): experientialist churches focus on the experience of religion and require each believer to go through some process of conversion (p. 64). In this group, he includes the GG, GGN, OGG, the GB, and roughly one-fifth of the CGK. Given the extensive literature on experientialist churches (Zwemer, 1992; Snel, 2007; Oosterbeek, 2006; Tijssen, 2018), they will be defined as a group in this research. To interpret this terminology appropriately, it should be noted that the

experientialist churches are also orthodox in the sense that they adhere to and maintain the three Forms of Unity (as the litmus test for being *Gereformeerd*), but it is their emphasis on the experientialist aspects that distinguishes them from the other orthodox *Gereformeerde* denominations.

Stoffels (1995) uses a distinction similar to Janse's, but makes a further distinction in the remaining group, based on organisational circles: there is an experientialist Reformed core, with churches like the GG, GGN, OGG, etc., a Vrijgemaakt Reformed core, limited almost exclusively to the GKV, and an Evangelical-Reformed core (p. 73). The first two, so Stoffels argues, still had recognisable pillars at the time of writing, with their own political parties, schools, newspapers, and social organisations, but the third is more diffuse. This is the group that supports the Evangelische Omroep, the Evangelische Alliantie, and the Evan*gelische Hogeschool*. The majority of this third group is composed of people who leave Reformed churches to join Baptist congregations, evangelical churches, or the Pentecostal movement (p. 144). Stoffels's distinction between experientialist churches and the two other categories is a useful one, given that he describes the experientialist churches as a group separate from the others by virtue of their distinct attitude towards society (p. 128-134). The other two groups are a little more problematic, however. While it is true that the GKv has its own pillar, the Vrijgemaakt Reformed core and the evangelical-Reformed group do not cover all remaining orthodox Protestant churches, as Stoffels himself also admits (p. 73), since they do not include supporters of the more generally religious organisations not attached to any particular denomination, such as the CDA, NCRV, or CNV. In addition, the final group of evangelical-Reformed organisations cannot be clearly delineated. Since the publication of Stoffels's work, this group has become more clearly defined due to its growth and development. However, it has not been included in the present study, since the churches that belong to it are generally not Reformed and have little data available.

More applicable to my research project is the distinction made by Dekker (1992, p. 12-13). He too maintains a distinction between experientialist churches and other churches, identifying the other groups as modern Reformed and orthodox Reformed. The best example of a modern Reformed church are the GKN, which have historically opened their doors earlier for progressive views on children, homosexuals, and women. Orthodox Reformed churches are those that are not experientialist but still adhere more closely to tradition; they typically maintain two Sunday services, bar children and homosexuals from the Holy Supper, and do not support women office-bearers. Even though Dekker's distinction between modern and orthodox Reformed can be useful, it will not be applied here, mostly for reasons of scale. Since my research focuses on the years 1892-2015, there are (too) many changes that have to be taken into account. As Dekker himself also states (2013, p. 6), the Reformed churches change rapidly. Therefore, whereas the GKN can be classified as an orthodox Reformed denomination in their earlier years, the developments from the 1950s onwards

would indicate a shift towards modern Reformed. The same goes for the GKv and for some local CGK churches.

Finally, also Polderman (1996) has worked with the different groups of churches. In his work on the way these different denominations view their place in the world, he proposes the following model:



Figure 2.3. The scale of involvement in the world, according to Polderman (1996, p.251)

The scale goes from left to right, with on the left the denominations that are most open towards society and other denominations, and on the right those that are more isolated and focused on their own group. While this model is too detailed to use as a classification of denominations for my study, I do mention it here because it will be useful later on when the border traffic between churches is interpreted in part II of this study.

In conclusion, the churches examined in this study will be divided into two groups: orthodox churches and experientialist churches. Although the sense in which the word 'orthodox' is used here may be somewhat confusing, since other sources use the same term to refer to more traditional – including experientialist – churches (Knippenberg, 1992, p. 3) or to any church that feels it has an absolute and universal claim to the truth (Stoffels, 1995, p. 18), we will use it here for churches in the Kampen dataset that are non-experientialist but still Reformed. For the sake of this study, then, the GKN, GKv, and NGK will be considered orthodox, and the GG, GGN, and HHK experientialist. The CGK and GB are more difficult cases, since they have a wider range of experience in their spirituality. Parts of the CGK and GB are orthodox, and parts are experientialist. Janse (1985) estimates that roughly one-fifth of the CGK is experientialist (p.67). Early in the CGK's history, attempts were made to discuss possible cooperation between the CGK and the GG, but these meetings gradually decreased, and in more recent years the CGK have focused more on working together with the GKv and NGK. The GB is as mixed as the CGK. As GB congregations are part of a larger whole (i.e., the NHK or PKN), there are GB members who sympathise strongly with their mother church, but also congregations that might be classified as orthodox (according to our definition), and are almost indistinguishable from their NHK or PKN counterparts with far fewer experientialist characteristics. There are also those GB congregations that give a much more experientialist impression. They used to use the *Statenvertaling* exclusively, and now the

*Herziene Statenvertaling*, and have a particular clothing style and lifestyle. Overall, most GB contacts and border traffic are with the CGK, GG, and HHK. There are, unfortunately, no data available on the exodus of GB members to evangelical churches and to the more moderate centre of the NHK/PKN, but the potential size of such a group should not be underestimated.

# 2.4. The history of the denominations in the Kampen dataset

This section is devoted to the history of the denominations that will be studied in this research, that is, the *Gereformeerde* denominations mentioned above. Most of these have collected annual data on their membership numbers for each local church, which will be used for the statistical analyses. One note of interest concerning these denominations is that schisms seem to be a defining characteristic: whereas the Roman Catholic Church and the NHK have remained mostly intact over the course of Dutch church history, the *Gereformeerde* churches have had a number of secessions and mergers, currently resulting in no less than ten *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Netherlands, not counting the ones that have merged with other churches or been disbanded. An overview of the history of the *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Netherlands is given below in figure 2.4:



Figure 2.4. A schematic overview of the Protestant churches in the Netherlands (Vos, 2007).
A number of these Reformed denominations appear in the Kampen dataset and will be analysed in this study. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the histories of these denominations, and later chapters will describe their temporal and spatial development.

## 2.4.1. The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

The GKN were in existence from 1892 to 2004 and had a complex history. Since this study is not church historical in nature, that history will not be discussed in great detail; we will only treat developments that are relevant for readers to refresh their memory or to gain a sufficient impression of the background of the denomination for interpreting the statistics that will be presented later on. A more detailed description of GKN history can be found in Endedijk (1990), Selderhuis (2006), and Van Middelkoop (2009).

#### 1834-1892

The Reformed church that emerged with the Reformation was a church of the nation; membership was obligatory for those in public offices. This came to an end in 1795, when state and church were formally separated. In 1816, King Willem I reorganised the church, this separation of church and state notwithstanding, and renamed it the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk. The so-called General Regulations (*Algemeen Reglement*) restricted the agenda of ecclesial boards to administrative issues only. In this way, he indirectly facilitated dogmatic diversity within the church. The king abolished the church order of Dordt, giving room for a top-down structure in the church and more government interference in its affairs. In addition, a new formula for adherence to the three Forms of Unity was introduced, whose wording suggested that ministers had to subscribe to them only *insofar* as they were in agreement with the Bible. Since the earlier subscription formula took this agreement for granted, many harboured the suspicion that the new formula opened the door for a more flexible interpretation of the confessions.

By 1834, feelings of dissatisfaction led to a schism in the church, called the *Afscheiding*, whose goal was a return to the old Reformed teachings and church polity. The early history of the *Afscheiding* congregations is characterised by nearly endless disagreements among their members, but also by substantial growth. In 1869, most of the *afgescheiden* congregations united to form the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*. By 1886, new problems in the NHK were coming to a head. At that time, there was a group of members within the NHK who by and large agreed with the Reformed views of those who had left with the *Afscheiding*, but instead of leaving the denomination, they tried to reform (parts of) it. Between 1879 and 1886, a new crisis started to brew, which had to do with the liberal approach many NHK ministers took to the Bible and confessions and with the top-down structure of church government. Abraham Kuyper, who had by then already founded a political party (the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*)

(ARP)) and a university (*Vrije Universiteit* (VU)), disagreed strongly with NHK practices, emphasising the authority of the Bible and the autonomy of local churches. In 1886, a conflict between conservative consistories and liberal ecclesial boards resulted in the so-called *Doleantie*. A substantial part of those in the NHK who identified as Reformed decided to leave their church.

Up to 1886, there had been little cooperation and communication between the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* and what became the new *Dolerende* churches. Kuyper disagreed with the way the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* had emerged, deserting the church when it had needed care. In addition, the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* operated as a national synod with regional branches, and Kuyper favoured a bottom-up denominational structure. The *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*, for its part, was of the opinion that *Dolerenden* should join the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* instead of establishing a new denomination. Despite the differences of opinion, the two groups started to discuss a merger. Based on their adherence to the Forms of Unity and a bottom-up denominational structure grounded in the Dordt church order, the GKN became a fact with the *Vereniging* of 1892. The GKN started with 360,000 members and soon developed into a dominant, vibrant denomination, with first-rate theologians (Kuyper, H. Bavinck), active church members, and strong relations with the ARP and the VU.

#### 1892-1944

After their institution, the GKN went through several periods of upheaval. There was, first of all, systematic disagreement on Kampen and Amsterdam as the two institutions where ministers were trained. Different solutions were proposed, but all of them met with resistance. In the end, both institutions were maintained, which became a hindrance to a full merger if 1892 out of the two constituting denominations of the GKN, as some congregations from the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* refused to join. Nevertheless, these differences gradually disappeared and ultimately the two segments became fairly well integrated. Kuyper's ideas on baptism and regeneration also created unrest, although that was temporary laid to rest by a compromise made at the General Synod of Utrecht in 1905.

However, new problems soon arose. In 1926, the General Synod of Assen deposed the Amsterdam minister Dr. J.G. Geelkerken for his allegedly liberal teachings. When he left the church, twelve other ministers joined him, followed by an estimated 5,000 (Selderhuis, 2006, p. 754) or 7,000 (Aalders, 2012, p. 306-309) members. They established the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Hersteld Verband* and later joined the NHK in 1946.

After a while, new voices of disagreement could be heard from the orthodox yet modern wing of the church. They did not seek a Reformation of the church by adherence to the traditional teachings, but by an orthodox renewal of Reformed teaching and practice in the face of modern views like those of Barthianism, totalitarianism, and ecumenism. The members of this movement of renewal were after a more Reformed approach to the topics of the day and a more consistent Reformed lifestyle at the expense of the prevailing views. Soon the so-called Reformational movement was labelled rebellious for challenging traditional views. The animosity grew when the influence of this group increased. Finally, disagreements over Kuyper's view of baptism and other topics, together with protests against hierarchal tendencies in the GKN, came to a head during the Second World War. Klaas Schilder, professor of theology in Kampen and one of the frontmen of the Reformational movement, was suspended and deposed. Shortly thereafter, on August 11, 1944, he proclaimed the Liberation (*Vrijmaking*) at a conference in The Hague. In the year that followed, about 10 percent of the GKN left the church to found the GKv, the second largest *Gereformeerde* denomination in our dataset.

#### 1944-2004

After the *Vrijmaking*, the GKN started a period of reorientation. A new movement arose among the younger church members, who felt that the denomination had isolated itself excessively from culture and focused too much on its own traditions. In their eyes, the church needed a fresh take on the Bible, faith, and its own position in the world. Prominent theologians like G.C. Berkouwer agreed with these views. In the meantime, worries arose about a weakening of the spiritual life of GKN members. In 1959, a report was published in which the researchers concluded that the joy of faith, church involvement, and the experience of the work of the Holy Spirit were all weakening.

From that time onwards, the GKN distanced itself from their nineteenth-century roots, and attempts were made to revive contacts with the NHK. In some places, shared services were held. In 1961, eighteen theologians, split equally between *Hervormd* and *Gereformeerd*, made an appeal to all NHK and GKN churches to unite. This was the beginning of the *Samen op Weg*-process, which ultimately resulted in a 2004 merger that included also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Netherlands. Aside from becoming more open to other denominations, the GKN started to allow for more pluralism. Opinions that deviated from the three Forms of Unity were tolerated. At the 1979/1980 Synod in Delft, a report was published on the authority of Scripture, entitled *God met ons: Over de aard van het schriftgezag.* This report concluded that the truth is not absolute and over against us, but historical and relational – an opinion that had once faced strong criticism from GKN members.

The Forms of Unity came to be seen more as guidelines than a set of rules. Issues that had up to that point in time been problematic, like the position of women in the church, homosexuality, paedocommunion, euthanasia, cohabitation, premarital sex, etc., by and by became less problematic, and a more situational approach was adopted. Having thus come full circle, the 2004 merger with the NHK can be seen as a logical final step in the development of the GKN.

#### 2004-present

As described above, the *Samen op weg*-process started in the 1960s after eighteen theologians met and petitioned the GKN and NHK for reunification. At a local level, cooperation between the NHK and the GKN occurred in many places, but such union proved more difficult to organise on a national scale. Combined synods were held to achieve a merger from 1973 onwards. In 1986, it was declared that the two denominations would merge. In the end, the Remonstrants in the NHK withdrew from the merger, but the Lutheran churches agreed to join. The writing of a new church order took until 2004, due to the theological resistance which came from several corners of the churches involved as well as all the practical problems arising. That resistance led to two additional schisms in 2004, when parts of the GKN and NHK decided not to join the merger. These are now, respectively, the vGKN and the HHK.

### 2.4.2. The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

In 1892, when the bulk of the *Afscheiding* and *Doleantie* churches united to form the GKN, three congregations, in Teuge, Noordeloos, and Zierikzee, chose to continue the *Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk*. This became the origin of the current CGK. Although the reasons for not joining the *Vereniging* were diverse, an important common one was the objections harboured by many CGK members against Kuyper's idea that children are baptised on the presumption that they are regenerate. In the view of these members, baptism is administered in response to God's call and promise. Secondly, many in the CGK reasoned that the differences between the *Afscheiding* and the *Doleantie* were too great for unification. According to the *Afgescheidenen*, the *Dolerenden* should have joined their church. And whereas the *Afscheiding* sought a return to the true values of the Reformation and responded to the doctrinal freedom ruling the NHK, the *Doleantie* had – in the eyes of many CGK members – fought above all against NHK church polity and stressed the importance of updating Reformed theology to be more compatible with modern times.

Soon after their foundation, the CGK had six congregations, four ministers, and roughly 700 members (Van Middelkoop, 2009, p. 375). Even then, however, differences within this group relating to their origins in various wings of the former *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* were evident. Part of the CGK supported the Kuyperian Christian organisations, like the VU and the ARP, while others joined the *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (SGP), founded in 1918.

Until the late 1920s, the CGK also retained contacts with the GG, with a view to possible cooperation (Van Driel, 2018, p. 83-90). The GKN for their part made efforts to retain contact with the CGK, which nevertheless declined these efforts.

After the *Vrijmaking* of 1944 (see below), the possibility of cooperation was discussed between the CGK and the GKv on three occasions, but these too were ended because the differences in spirituality and culture were deemed too large.

The CGK are less homogeneous than most other *Gereformeerde* denominations, as one of the wings of this denomination is close to the GKN and, later on, the GKV and NGK, while another is closer to the GG side. From the 1950s onwards, more room started to be given for innovation. The new Bible translation of 1951 came to be adopted as an acceptable translation (alongside the traditional *Staatenvertaling*), and, in a similar vein, new hymnals were produced, active voting rights were granted to women, and church services came to be broadcast on television. Some of the more experientialist members and ministers strongly opposed these trends, and a number of them left the CGK for the GG. But even in the direst of times, there was no schism, making the CGK a record-holder as the longest non-ruptured Reformed denomination in the Netherlands.

Maintaining a balance within the CGK has always been difficult. Their synods have always been careful about making pronouncements on dogma or other disputed issues, often refraining from doing so altogether. As a result, the identity of the CGK as a whole is less outspoken than it is for most other *Gereformeerde* denominations.

# 2.4.3. The Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt 1944-1960

The roots of the GKv are to be found in the unrest experienced within the GKN during the 1930s, with the rise of a movement propagating a more consistent life lived out of a Reformed lifestyle and mindset. Several Kuyperian notions, like presumptive regeneration, common grace, and the pluriformity of the church, along with the scholastic elements in his theology, were subjected to criticism, which nevertheless met with fierce opposition from the side of Kuyper's followers who were eager to protect his heritage.

The Synod of Sneek-Utrecht (1939-1943) tried to mitigate the differences in 1942 by the formulation of mild conclusions on a number of disputed points. When the opposition protested against a Kuyperian interpretation of the conclusions in an explanatory report from synod, followed by a poorly communicated prolongation of the Synod after its scheduled closing in August 1942, the situation escalated. The synod now forced the churches and new ministers to accept its interpretation of the disputed points. As a result, the protests grew, and in the end a number of ministers and elders were suspended. On August 11, 1944, protesting church members assembled in The Hague. There Klaas Schilder, one of the leaders of the protest movement, read the *Acte van Vrijmaking of Wederkeer*, which appealed to the churches to reject the synodical decisions

from 1942 and later, along with the recent suspensions. This signalled the beginnings of the *Vrijmaking*, which a growing number of churches and church members gradually joined to form the GKv. Since the adherents of the *Vrijmaking* saw themselves as a continuation of the true Reformed church, they claimed the right to retain the name *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* for themselves. In order to avoid confusion, however, they added the qualifier "maintaining article 31" (*onderhoudende artikel 31*), in reference to article 31 of the Church Order, which states that churches must comply with the General Synod unless its decisions are not in accordance with the Bible. Later on, these churches more commonly distinguished themselves from the GKN with the qualifier "Liberated" (*Vrijgemaakt*; cf. the abbreviation GKv).

Once the GKv separated themselves from the GKN, they felt that this should have consequences for other aspects of life as well, including schools. This formed a stark contrast to the way the CGK had positioned themselves in 1892. In consistently living out a Reformed lifestyle and mindset, the *Vrijgemaakten* stressed the unity of life, centred around the church. *Vrijgemaakt* primary and secondary schools were established, a political party was founded (the *Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond*, or GPV), as well as a daily newspaper (the *Gereformeerd Gezinsblad*, later the *Nederlands Dagblad*), and multiple labour unions and other organisations. The GKv thus founded its own sub-pillar and cultivated a strong identity, which included the explicit pretention of being the only true church.

#### 1960-1970

Unfortunately, after the schism of the *Vrijmaking*, there was to be no lasting peace within the denomination. Different groups of members had joined the GKv for somewhat different reasons, and no consensus on the importance of rigid separation as a church from surrounding society, including other *Gere-formeerde* kerken, could be reached. In the 1960s, several ministers were suspended for doctrinal leniency in their teaching or their contacts with the GKN. In 1966, those who sympathised with these suspended ministers published an Open Letter (*Open Brief*), criticising the fragmented nature of the church, strict adherence to the Reformed confessions, and the allegedly universal significance of the *Vrijmaking*. This letter ignited fiery debates and ended in a problematic situation. The General Synod rejected the *Open Brief*, ministers were suspended, churches excluded from the GKv, and students were barred from the denominational seminary (*Theologische Hogeschool*). In the wake of these events, a quarter of the membership left the GKv and established a new federation, the NGK.

#### 1970 and after

The two decades after the schism resulting in the NGK were fairly quiet. The GKv flourished and continued to build their community, publishing their own

hymnals and working on their continued existence. In the 1990s, however, things began to change, mostly with regard to the place of the GKy in society and their position on other churches. Both the churches and their Vrijaemaakte organisations began to assume a more open attitude. Parts of GKv life gradually started to open up to contacts with other churches: the ND newspaper decided that non-Vrijgemaakte journalists could work for it, the GPV abandoned its Vrijgemaakte-only membership policy and merged with the RPF in the ChristenUnie (CU) in 2001, and *Vrijaemaakte* secondary schools opened their doors to teachers and students from other churches. Vrijgemaakten, too, joined broader Christian and non-Christian organisations. The GKy renewed contacts with the CGK and NGK, and many local churches started to work together and hold combined services. The influence of the evangelical movement also increased. The focus started to shift slightly from tradition and rules to personal experience and the joy in Jesus Christ, In 1993, the synod allowed active voting rights for women in church council elections. In 1999, it was decided that, while divorce was not as such condoned, it should, under certain circumstances, be possible to remarry before the church. In addition to these innovations, the GKy also underwent many liturgical changes as new hymnals were accepted, attendance at Sunday afternoon services declined, and other denominations were approached for cooperation.

Not all GKv members were happy with these developments, however, as they sought to adhere to the synodical views of the 1960s and to societal separation. They began holding meetings in the late 1980s and published periodicals on the developments in the GKv and the resulting weakening of the 1944 viewpoints. A portion of this group left the GKv in 2003, calling itself *De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (hersteld)* (DGK). Another group broke off in 2009 for the same reason, and took the name the *Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland* (GKN). In 2017, the GKv decided to allow women in office. As this was factually the last barrier separating the GKv and the NGK, the two churches decided to aim at reunification by the early 2020s.

## 2.4.4. The Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

As the previous section made clear, after the 1944 *Vrijmaking*, part of its adherents felt that the highly pillarised community of the GKv had become too rigid in the face of modern social and ecclesial developments. To their mind, the GKv adhered too strongly to the confessions and to its legal argument claiming to be the true church, keeping churches and members too isolated from kindred Reformed denominations. They likewise considered the notion of the GKv as the only true church to be inaccurate and the occasion for an exaggerated self-image. In addition to this, some ministers felt that the GKv bound itself too tightly to the Forms of Unity; to their mind, disagreement with the confessions was less serious than disagreement with the Bible. However, many church members and church councils were critical of these views. They argued that the confessions and the Bible should be treated as a whole, and that ministers have to express their agreement with the confessions as conforming to Scripture in every respect. Multiple ministers were reprimanded for not doing so

At the same time, a new matter arose. The GKv had closed its doors to relations with the GKN ever since the *Vrijmaking*. When the GKN in the city of Groningen asked the local GKv councils to discuss possible cooperation, the GKv councils turned down the offer, but one minister, who pastored the church of Groningen-Zuid, did go to meet them. As a result, he was suspended by his own church council in 1963. There were protests against this decision and the procedure that followed, but the General Synod of Rotterdam-Delfshaven in 1964 deemed the course of action correct. This decision was taken by the smallest possible majority, with fourteen votes in favour and thirteen against.

These events ushered in a new period of unrest. In 1966, an *Open Brief* was published, expressing the view that the church council of Groningen-Zuid had caused a rift in the church by suspending its minister. The letter was taken as a protest against the GKv as a whole. Most ministers and members of the GKv rejected the letter, but a considerable number of people shared the opinions expressed by its writers. As a result, multiple ministers were suspended or deposed on the grounds of endangering the Reformed identity. Problems also came to a head at the Theological University in Kampen. Professors were terminated or stripped of their privileges, and students had to leave the School.

In 1967, an official schism followed. Between 1967 and 1969, a large number of people left the GKv and started what would later become known as the NGK. They built their own place in the Reformed world, summoning their own general synod called the "National Assembly (*Landelijke Vergadering*, or LV), publishing their own magazine, and putting an own church order into practice. They distinguished themselves from the other members of the Reformed family by their openness and leniency, for instance being more welcoming to other denominations and having a more concise church order. For this reason, they have been seen as a kind of Reformed experimental garden. The NGK LV, for instance, allowed women office-bearers as early as 1994. The NGK has locally cooperated with CGK churches since before the Schism of 1967. In the early 2000s, the NGK also started cooperating with the GKv at the local level. And in 2017, the GKv General Synod and the GKN LV decided together to work towards a merger of their respective denominations.

## 2.4.5. The Gereformeerde Gemeenten

The GG have been in existence since 1907, but had a long history leading up to their foundation. This history started in 1834, with the *Afscheiding*. The members of this movement disagreed with the NHK on several points, but soon disagreements also arose within their own ranks. The main point of contention for the new denomination concerned recognition by the government, which demanded that they give up the term "Gereformeerd" in their name. Most of the

*Afgescheidenen* agreed to this, but others refused and called themselves the *Gereformeerde Kerken onder het Kruis.* In 1869, these united to form the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*, but some stayed independent as *Kruisgemeenten*.

In the same period, a different group of churches emerged. These were the Ledeboerian churches, named after Rev. L.G.C. Ledeboer, who initially sympathised with the *Afscheiding* and was banned from the NHK, but ended up founding a separate series of congregations. For many years, this denomination existed alongside the *Kruisgemeenten*, but in 1907, G.H. Kersten succeeded in uniting the two groups, thereby founding the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten*. A few Ledeboeriaan churches did not join in the merger, however. Together with a number of other congregations of varying origins, they founded the OGG in 1948.

In the beginning of their existence, the GG started to craft a place for itself in society. After the pacification of the school struggle in 1917, several experientialist primary schools were opened, so that children from experientialist churches could receive an appropriate education. A school for the training of ministers was opened in Rotterdam in 1927, and the church had informal ties to the SGP, founded by Kersten in 1918. The GG have had their own magazine, *De Saambinder*, ever since 1919, and, in 1971, several members of the NHK, CGK, GG, GGN, and OGG founded a daily called the *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, in reaction to the declining Reformed identity of the newspapers *Trouw* and *De Rotterdammer*. Mostly due to the developments in the GKN in those years, the GG along with several other denominations started to feel a true need to make their departure from the general Protestant pillar and from modern society in general more visible to the outside world, and expanded the beginnings of their societal pillar with its origins in the time of Kersten, for instance by opening their own primary and secondary schools.

In the 1920s, discussions were held with the CGK to discuss possible cooperation or unification, but the two churches failed to reach agreement on the covenant of grace. Consequently, the GG General Synod decided to make definitive pronouncements on these issues in 1931. The GG view is that true believers alone are part of the covenant of grace, and that baptised members belong to the outward covenant only. It is for this reason that GG sermons focus on the people's awareness that, as children of Adam, they are sinful and must repent and be converted so as to become partakers of the covenant, whereas sermons in many other Reformed denominations place greater emphasis on persisting in the status that is common to all church members who are baptised and believe. In the GG view, other Reformed churches were overly optimistic about the question of personal salvation. In line with this, and in order to be sure of their true calling, potential candidates for the ministry in the GG are interviewed and screened before they can start their studies. This policy has led to a persistent shortage of ministers in GG circles. Disagreement arose within the GG after C. Steenblok came over from the GKN to become a minister in the GG and was established as Kersten's successor at the Theological School in Rotterdam. In 1953, five ministers, including Steenblok, left and founded a new church, the GGN. Although many issues had played a role in that conflict, after the separation both sides placed their emphasis on differences in their respective views on the well-meant gospel offer. Steenblok stated that the offering of grace was conditional. The appeal to conversion was aimed at the entire congregation, but grace is only ensured for the 'poor in spirit', those who 'hunger and thirst after righteousness', that is, those who are aware of their sinfulness and feel the urgency of redemption. Steenblok felt that others in the GG lacked clarity on these points.

The troubled period that culminated in the events of 1953 was followed by several much quieter decades. Nevertheless, the 1970s and later times did see new disruptions from time to time, and yet, unity was preserved and the denomination managed to consolidate its position. An important figure in these years was Rev. A. Vergunst. He was a teacher at the Theological School and chaired multiple general synods. He was also chairman of the SGP board, and involved with the RD. Another person of note in this period was Rev. J. van Haaren, with his broader engagement as an important figure in the building of the experientialist pillar. He was chair of the *Gereformeerde Bijbel Stichting*, the protector of the *Statenvertaling*, and the first chairman of the board of the Van Lodenstein College, which set a new standard for experientialist secondary education. The efforts of both Vergunst and Van Haaren strengthened contact with the GGN and OGG, while also keeping in touch with the GB and CGK. Even today, the GG adhere to their particular lifestyle, with strict rules regarding the subordinate position of women, restricted television use, and dress.

## 2.4.6. The Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland

As noted in the previous section, the GGN were founded in 1953, after Steenblok was deposed as instructor at the Theological School in Rotterdam. He left the GG together with the largest part of his congregation, followed by three other ministers. Together they founded the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland*. Their theological position can be summarised in the term they coined: "conditional offer of grace." These churches started with 9,000 members and 33 local congregations (see chapter 11). Another rift occurred within the GGN in 1980, when three ministers left the denomination to establish the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland* (buiten verband), numbering seven congregations and roughly 3,000 members (Van Middelkoop, 2009, p. 355), although the accuracy of this number is difficult to confirm. After this split, the GGN was left with three ministers and 16,000 members. One minister soon left for the USA, and a second died, leaving the only remaining minister, Rev. F. Mallan, to lead the entire denomination on his own for a short while, until Rev. A. van Straalen returned

from the USA. Gradually, a growing number of ministers completed their theological education. A substantial part of the members who left in 1980 returned to the GGN in 2008 and 2009, after their three ministers passed away and left no successors.

## 2.4.7. The Hersteld Hervormde Kerk

When the PKN was formed in 2004, members were divided in their appreciation for the merging process and its outcome. One group, mostly from the side that sympathised with the *Gereformeerde Bond*, was of the opinion that the confessions of the Lutheran church, which were included among the confessional documents of the PKN at the merger, could not be adhered to by Reformed people, and that doing so would imply a fundamental change in the identity of the church. For this reason, they choose to stay apart and to continue the NHK under the name Hersteld Hervormde Kerk. The rift was a painful one, often dividing Gereformeerde Bond congregations, and lawsuits over ownership of the property (including buildings) followed, as the property had to be divided and the right to use the buildings granted to one group or the other. According to Hervormde church government, even if a church council leaves the denomination along with most of its members, all buildings and other possessions remain the property of the original *Hervormde* church. Accordingly, the new HHK denomination built many new churches. The HHK now also has its own seminary at the VU, its own magazine, youth clubs, mission work, etc. Although similar in many respects, the HHK is more heterogeneous in nature than the GG. On the local level, there is some cooperation with the right wing of the CGK.

## 2.4.8. The Gereformeerde Bond

Many concerned members in the NHK who felt that their church was abandoning its "Reformed" background left their denomination in the nineteenth century in protest against the lack of discipline undertaken against liberal theological views and against the hierarchal governance structure. Many other Gereformeerde members, however, stayed in the NHK, but did not give in. In 1906, leading theologians, among them Hugo Visscher, founded the Gereformeerde Bond tot verbreiding en verdediging van de Waarheid in de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk [The Reformed Association for the expansion and defence of the Truth in the Dutch Reformed Church] (GB). They felt that they had to care for the church and could never join a secession like the *Afscheiding* or *Doleantie*, and preferred to stay loyal to the national church, which they considered their mother, albeit a mother who was ill. Because the Reformed truth was central to them, they named the association's periodical *De Waarheidsvriend* [The Friend of Truth]. The GB is not an alliance of consistories, but has only individual members. Over the years, an increasing number of local hervormde congregations took on a GB character, and the GB became an influential orthodox segment within the NHK, especially after the Second World War. The GB and its members and supporters differed from Kuyper mainly on the view of the church, but for long GB people often stood shoulder to shoulder with Kuyperians on Christian school boards. In politics, up to the 1960s, several GB leaders and other supporters joined the ARP.

Back in the early days, most of the GB just wanted to maintain their own Gereformeerde identity within a Hervormd environment. The relationship between the GB and the NHK has not been an easy one. When the NHK worked on a new church order in the 1940s, the GB was not invited to enter the discussions, but the GB for its part also expressed no desire to help. In the end, the GB accepted the 1951 church order, which defined the church as a Christ-confessing church for the Dutch people as a whole. In 1958, however, the NHK decided to allow women to serve in the ecclesiastical offices, which the GB considered an unbiblical decision. Apart from maintaining its position within the NHK, the GB started to feel increasingly convinced that it should try to influence the course of the NHK. From that moment onward, the GB participated actively in governmental synods and started to fulfil other organisational functions. To this day, the GB sees it as its function to try to keep the NHK – and its successor, the PKN - as close to the Reformed teachings as possible. When the NHK merged with the GKN and the ELK in 2004 to form the PKN, the GB was very troubled. It opposed the change, but once the merger was decided upon, most of the Bond remained and indeed joined the PKN. Part of the GB, however, left to found the HHK.

Although the GB has no status as a denomination, it has a central position within the *Gereformeerde* family. The number of NHK – and, later, PKN – members in local congregations with GB ministers is much larger than that of any of the other *Gereformeerde* denominations discussed in this study, with the one exception of the GKN (until its merger into the PKN in 2004), as the GB had almost 700,000 members around 1990. Moreover, GB members maintain relationships with many of these churches, and GB congregations often represent relatively attractive alternatives for dissatisfied members of these other *Gereformeerde* churches.

## 3. The dataset

The present study is based on a dataset comprised of data pertaining to eight different denominations. In the first part of this chapter, the data collection will be thoroughly described and explained. In the second part, I will describe the processes I applied to the data in order to clean them up and to summarise them, and to make them suitable for analyses.

## 3.1. Data collection

Most of the data collection for the Kampen dataset was carried out by prof. dr. M. te Velde, with the help of dr. Jan Smelik, by the digitisation of statistical information available in the yearbooks published by the different denominations. Others have helped in collecting yearbooks and compiling the digital dataset, most of them students at the Theological University Kampen. During this phrase, some apparent typos that were found in the yearbooks were removed. Te Velde and Smelik collected data up to 2003, while I added the data for the period 2004-2015. The data were saved in DBF format and later converted to Excel.

The dataset concerns the eight denominations mentioned in section 1.5 above, which I repeat here for the sake of convenience:

- 1. *The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN) [Reformed Churches in the Netherlands]. The data for this denomination are available from 1892-2003.
- 2. *The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* (CGK) [Christian Reformed Churches]. The data available for this denomination are available from 1919-2015, although the CGK were founded in 1892.
- 3. *The Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt* (GKv) [Reformed Churches Liberated]. The data are available from 1946 to 2015.
- 4. *The Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* (NGK) [Netherlands Reformed Churches]. The data are available from 1970 to 2015.
- 5. *The Gereformeerde Gemeenten* (GG) [Reformed Congregations]. The data are available from 1948 to 2015, although the GG were founded in 1907.
- 6. *The Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland* (GGN) [Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands]. The data are available from the beginning onwards, that is, from 1954 to 2015.
- 7. *The Hersteld Hervormde Kerk* (HHK) [Restored Reformed Church]. The data are available from 2010 to 2015, although the HHK was founded in 2004.

8. *The Gereformeerde Bond in de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* (GB) [Reformed Association in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands]. Information is available from 1974 to 2015, although the GB was founded in 1906.

Most data have been collected from the respective denominations' own yearbooks. In these yearbooks, churches publish contact information for local congregations, ministers, secretaries, etc., in memoriams of important people, a report of the main events of the past year, and some additional information. Most importantly for us, however, these books also publish membership numbers for each local church and a national statistical overview. These numbers are based on the churches' own administrative records and published annually. Usually, the statistics include total numbers, as well as the numbers of confessing members and sometimes baptised members. If the numbers for baptised members were not provided, they were generated in this research by subtracting the confessing members from the total membership.

The compilation of data for the GB was more complicated than it was for the other denominations. The reason for this is that the GB is not an administrative unity, but an association active within the NHK and, later, the PKN. There are no yearbooks reporting membership numbers available. What is available, however, is a list of members of the association, many of them pastors. Their *gereformeerde* convictions are reflected in their preaching, and, at least in this important respect, GB congregations are comparable to those of the seven denominations in the list (Smelik 2003).

Based on this observation, we assigned all members of NHK – and, later, PKN – congregations served by ministers who were members of the GB to the GB category. For local congregations served exclusively by a GB minister or GB ministers, the entire congregation was considered to belong to the GB. For local congregations whose ministers were not all GB members, a proportional share of the total membership was assigned to the GB.

This process is clearly not ideal, as church members do not necessarily agree with the spirituality of their minister. While this holds true for all denominations, in the NHK/PKN in particular, there are many members who formally belong to a particular congregation but never attend church services there, while this is an exceptional circumstance in the other denominations examined here. This circumstance will play a significant role in GB congregations in large cities, which often have a considerable group of people who are not actively involved in church but remain members. They often do not identify strongly as GB. Another issue in the GB dataset is the discontinuity occurring in the number of members attributed to the GB in mixed congregations when the share of GB ministers changes. Such discontinuities do not occur in reality, and are purely a result of the way we have chosen to deal with the data. Since there do not ap-

pear to be better ways to approximate the number of NHK/PKN members adhering to the GB, we decided to accept these drawbacks in the interest of constructing an indicative picture of the evolution of the importance of the GB within the *gereformeerde* family, where it clearly has a vital place.

A final remark needs to be made about the interpolation of data. Most denominations have missing data for years when no yearbook was published. In such cases, we have interpolated the data, by taking the numbers from the preceding and succeeding year and calculating an average. These data need to be handled with care, however, as they usually pertain to important years, like that of a merger or split. Wherever such circumstances are important, this will be mentioned in the text. The missing years for which data have been interpolated are the following:

GKN: 1945 CGK: 1944, 1945 NGK: 1972, 1973, 1976 GB: 1976, 1978, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1992, 2004

In addition to membership numbers for each local congregation, the yearbooks sometimes also offer other numerical information that is relevant to the purposes of this study. Some denominations, for instance, reported the number of baptisms, confessions, deaths, marriages, and incoming and outgoing interdenominational border traffic. For the border traffic, most overviews specify the denominations from which these members came or to which they went. Unfortunately, these overviews are only available denomination-wide, and not for individual local churches. The information collected also varies per year; for instance, the number of marriages in the GKN are reported up to 1988, when the data stop. There are also denominations that have not collected such data at all.

This additional information was added to the dataset whenever available. The list of available years per denomination is as follows:

GKN: 1947-1993 CGK: 1962-2015 GKv: 1972-2015 NGK: 1985-2015 GG: Demography 2005-2015; border traffic 1967-2015 GGN: No demography; border traffic 2010-2015 HHK:Unavailable GB:Unavailable

A final note also needs to be made in regard to the so-called *samenwerkingsgemeenten*, which are local congregations composed of members from two or

more different denominations. These combinations often involve the CGK, GKv, and/or NGK. For financial reasons, the members were tracked separately by their respective denominations. In the Kampen dataset, this has been kept that way.

## 3.2. The source material

As noted, the data have been collected using the yearbooks published by the different denominations themselves. The data were collected either by a committee or by the publisher, who approached all local churches at a certain time of year (usually October). They sent them forms that needed to be filled out (see figure 3.1 for an example of these forms). This used to be done on paper by mail, but most denominations nowadays have digital portals or dashboards that can be used by the secretaries of the churches to adjust or add information. These data are then compiled into a database and published in book format.



Figure 3.1. A form from 1991 used to collect data from GKv churches by Oosterbaan & Le Cointre (A. Boertien, personal communication, January 22, 2021)

There are several advantages and disadvantages to the use of yearbooks as opposed to other methods. The first upshot of using the information published by denominations themselves is that they contain objective rather than subjective information. The Dutch censuses, held roughly once a decade, measured membership by asking people if they were a member of a church, and, if so, to identify the denomination to which they belonged. As it turns out (Advocaat, Prak & te Velde, 2007, p. 310, 322), this led to potential misunderstandings and misrepresentations, as many people were unsure about the name of their denomination, or several branches were not included on the multiple choice forms used in certain years. The latter circumstance has meant, for example, that the NGK and GGN have never been measured in the censuses.

Another advantage of the yearbooks is that they were generally published every year, meaning that they give a much more complete and detailed overview of the development of membership numbers than the early, decennial censuses do. In addition, the censuses, and later measurements by the CBS, do not always include a full overview of all denominations, since, as has just been noted, the GGN and NGK were missing in the 1960 and 1971 censuses, Currently, the categorisation used by the CBS is: secular, Roman Catholic, PKN, Hervormd, Gereformeerd, and miscellaneous. There are several problems with this classification, the first of which is that the group *Gereformeerd*, which is the group at the centre of my study, is not divided into further categories, even though there are notable differences between, for instance, orthodox and experientialist denominations (see chapter 2). The second problem is that *Hervormd* and Gereformeerd are still maintained alongside the PKN, even though the former two have merged into the latter. Therefore, for the period after 2004, when the PKN was founded, the administration is unclear as to who belongs to which denomination.

Of course, there are also problems with the yearbooks. Although the information they provide is more detailed than that in the censuses and CBS data, potential problems of the vearbooks include over-reporting of membership numbers and different visions on membership. The first problem, over-reporting of membership, has to do with the way the data are collected. Local churches are approached each year with a form they have to fill out with fields for total members and confessing members. Each church usually has one person, a type of secretary, who has access to the membership administration records and who can see how many people are registered with their church. This gives a fairly accurate representation of membership numbers, provided that all members regularly attend a church associated with one specific denomination, as was long the case. However, more recently, intensified contacts between churches have led to the integration of local congregations associated with different denominations. People may feel primarily committed to their local congregation, and less or not at all connected to the larger denomination with which that local congregation is affiliated. Moreover, boundaries between congregations associated with different denominations have become less strict, and an increasing number of members regularly visit services of other congregations, without converting their membership. An exception to this general pattern are HHK members.

Secondly, as some denominations have become less strict, the connection between membership and regular church attendance has become somewhat opaque. Similarly, the share of inactive members appears to be increasing everywhere. The effect is that numbers do not reflect the actual size of a church. These phenomena are of more importance in some churches than others. The general impression is that in the experientialist denominations, which are in many respects more traditional than the orthodox ones, the gap between membership and active belonging is still small.

These kinds of differences in number counting are not reported in the yearbooks, but it must be kept in mind that denomination membership does not mean exactly the same thing for all. Whereas in the GG there is a strong relationship between membership and church attendance throughout the whole period studied, that relationship has always been much weaker in the average NHK congregation, while for the GKv it has shifted from very strong to less strong in the course of time. In general, the connection between church membership and attendance has been stronger for all *Gereformeerde* denominations (with the exception of the GKN since the 1960s) than it has been for most other religious groups. This relationship can be seen in figures 3.1 and 3.2, which juxtapose CBS data on church membership and church attendance:



Figure 3.1. Church membership and attendance in *Gereformeerde* denominations (CBS, 2016)

Figure 3.1 shows the statistics on church membership and attendance in the *Gereformeerde* denominations as defined by the CBS, thus including parts of the PKN and all other denominations that include the term *Gereformeerd* in their name. The gap between membership and attendance is clearly visible. Generally, attendance as a percentage of the Dutch population is 2% lower than membership, meaning that if 7% of the Dutch told the CBS that they were members of a *Gereformeerde* church, some 5% of the total Dutch population actually attended church on a regular basis. These numbers can be compared to those of the Roman Catholic Church, where the gap is much wider. Whereas in 1971 40% of the Dutch population was Catholic, only 20% actually attended mass. By 2018, this had changed to 23% and 3%, respectively:



Figure 3.2. Church membership and attendance in Catholic churches (CBS, 2016)

This means that, overall, the difference between subjectively reported membership of *Gereformeerde* churches and objective membership administration records should not be too large. Advokaat, Prak, and Te Velde (2007, p. 315) have examined this precise question by comparing the data from the Kampen dataset with the censuses, and, as it turns out, the census of 1947 reported 11% more *Gereformeerde* members than the Kampen dataset. By 1960 and 1971, this had decreased to 6%. These are still fairly large differences, but they can in significant measure be explained by the wording of the questions and answers. There was also agreement in the geographical distribution of members of *Gereformeerde* denominations between the censuses and the Kampen dataset. This means that the official registration of the *Gereformeerde* denominations is fairly accurate and not overly optimistic in the years analysed, unlike the situation in the Roman Catholic Church and the *Hervormde* churches. It seems, then, that the yearbooks offer a largely accurate representation of true membership numbers for each denomination. This is also important for the churches themselves, as they are partly financed by their members and therefore need an accurate registration.

Comparability between the figures collected by various denominations is an issue. Some differences between methods need to be taken into account. For instance, not all yearbooks were published in the beginning of the year, and they may have had different dates of data collection. This is not a large problem, but it does need to be kept in mind for the analyses. Secondly, not all churches collected the same data. This is important especially for the demographic information and for the border traffic. Some churches are missing information on baptisms, weddings, and deaths, for instance. In addition, the denominations all have different lists of denominations with which they share traffic. This is unsurprising, as traffic between certain combinations of denominations is simply non-existent or negligible, but the fact that the GKv is missing information on border traffic with evangelical congregations can be problematic. On top of that, the border traffic between denominations often does not add up. When the numbers between vearbooks of different churches are compared, they frequently do not match, as one church will often count more incoming members from another denomination than that denomination lists as outgoing members.

## 3.3. Data organisation

After all the data had been collected, it needed to be cleaned up and organised. As a first step, the data of the different denominations were put into a single dataset and imported into Stata, resulting in the following variables:

- 1. Year
- 2. Denomination
- 3. Church name
- 4. Classis (a small group of local churches working together)
- 5. *Particuliere Synode* (PS) (a group of classes working together)
- 6. Postal code of the church building
- 7. Province
- 8. Total number of members (TAL)
- 9. Number of confessing members (BLL)
- 10. Number of baptised members (DPL)

The results of this process were matched with data from the CBS containing information on population size, municipality surface area, and population density. The dataset with which I started included the postal codes of the building where the church held its services. Those postal codes have been matched with

the codes of the municipality in which the churches stand, which were then matched with the data on population and surface area.

There are several reasons for matching the churches to the 415 municipalities of the Netherlands in 2012. First of all, denominations have different ways of structuring their local churches. Not all local churches are grouped into classes, and not all classes are grouped into particular synods, and the areas of these classes and particular synods also do not match across different denominations, nor do they align with Dutch geographical divisions. This makes it hard to find a template that will fit all the churches. As my goal is to describe the differences and similarities between the churches, it is of crucial importance to be able to study them all in the same shape. The second reason is that I wanted to be able to track the development of the churches studied in the light of the population of the Netherlands. Putting the information on the churches in a format that is defined by the way the Netherlands is organised allows me to do so beautifully. The question arose whether the data would be best analysed by municipality, by province, or by COROP region. A COROP region is a statistical division which the CBS uses for the Netherlands, dividing the country into forty areas to facilitate statistical descriptions. I, however, chose to summarise the data on the level of municipalities. This will give the descriptions more texture and detail as there are 415 of them as opposed to forty COROP regions. I used the 2012 division, since it was most readily available at the time the project was started. Of course, comparing data on local churches with Dutch municipalities yields its own problems, since the borders do not necessarily coincide. There are churches that are situated in one place, but draw members from a number of municipalities in the region, just as there are municipalities that have more than one local church, either of the same denomination or from different denominations.

The Kampen dataset, then, includes the following basic information that I will use for my analyses. For each municipality, the population size, density, and surface area is given, followed by total membership of the different denominations for that year in the whole country, then the total membership by church for that municipality, the number of local churches in the Netherlands, and the average congregation size. This gives us the following list of variables:

- 1. Year
- 2. Province
- 3. Municipality
- 4. Surface area
- 5. Population size by municipality
- 6. Population density by municipality
- 7. Population of the Netherlands
- 8. Total number of members by denomination in the Netherlands
- 9. Total number of members by denomination by municipality

- 10. National share of Reformed denominations as part of the Dutch population
- 11. Local share of Reformed churches as part of the Dutch population
- 12. Number of individual churches by denomination by municipality
- 13. Average number of members by individual church.

Variables 8-13 all consist of multiple variables, one for each denomination. These variables also include values for all the churches combined, making it possible to determine how many Reformed people there are in total in the Netherlands at any given time.

The demographic overviews from the yearbooks have been left as they were, since they will only be used for background analyses and do not comprise nearly as large a dataset as the rest. Descriptive statistics of the information in our dataset can be found in Appendix A-C, where all the aforementioned information is collected and presented in lists.

## 4. Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss how the questions posed in chapter 1 will be answered and how the hypotheses formulated in part IV will be tested using the Kampen dataset as described in chapter 3.

# 4.1. The temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands

The first question formulated in chapter 1 is what the temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands looks like. This development will be presented for each denomination in a separate chapter, and each chapter will follow the same format. First, the descriptions will be presented. These are fairly simple, as they are just descriptive statistics of the variables pertaining to that denomination extracted from Stata. I will summarise the data on membership numbers, growth, percentage of the Dutch population, the number of local churches, and their average size. Growth will be discussed in detail, tying into the history of the denominations as presented in chapter 2, so that unexpected dips or peaks can be explained. The growth will also be compared to that of the Dutch population, so as to determine whether the growth is natural for a subpopulation of a larger group or if it deviates.

The next part of each chapter will deal with the demographic developments. Unfortunately, there are few data available on the age of members or on variables like education, work, or income. The only available information concerns the number of baptised and confessing members. As noted above, I assume that most people do public confession around the age of twenty. This means that we can map the ratio of people over and below the age of twenty. The death rates also give an indication of the age demographics of the different denominations. These are useful statistics to present and to compare to the Dutch population. Apart from these statistics, for most churches there are also statistics available on the number of baptisms, deaths, and confessions, and on the number of people who either left or joined the denomination. These data will also be presented and used to try and explain in some measure the development of the total membership numbers.

# 4.2. The spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands

The spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands will be presented in part III. Maps will be offered for all the denominations, and we will consider where the majority of the membership of each denomination lives and how this changed through the years. Apart from these maps, there will also be tables showing the municipalities that have the most members of each denomination at different points in time, along with graphs presenting the numbers of members per province, also at different times in their history.

One final analysis to be made in this part of the study pertains to the segregation of the churches. The segregation of minority groups refers to the extent to which they cluster together to form a society apart from the majority population. An obvious example for the Netherlands is the significantly lower number of Reformed people in Noord-Brabant and Limburg compared to the rest of the country, as these provinces are historically Catholic. It is also clear that the four largest cities and the surrounding area are less religious than the rest of the country. In fact, as figure 4.1 shows, the membership of the various Reformed churches is much more concentrated than one might assume from these basic observations:



Figure 4.1. The distribution of Reformed people in the Netherlands in 2015

The belt appearing in figure 4.1 is broader than what is generally known as the Dutch 'Bible belt,' a term referring to the places where members of the experientialist denominations are overrepresented. This Bible belt coincides with the

lower and middle parts of the belt shown in the figure. The blue areas in the three northern provinces and in the Overijssel Vechtstreek show that the orthodox Reformed denominations have their own specific geographical patterns.

In order to measure the clustering of Reformed people in the Netherlands, two measurements will be used: a dissimilarity index and an exposure index. Both indices measure segregation, but in slightly different ways. The dissimilarity index measures the share of people from the minority group who would have to relocate in order to create an even distribution of the minority group over the total population. The following formula was used (Forest, 2005, p. 1):

$$D = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left| \frac{w_i}{w_T} - \frac{b_i}{B_T} \right|$$

Where:

 $\begin{array}{l} n = \mbox{the number of tracts or special units (in this case, municipalities)} \\ w_i = \mbox{the number of non-Reformed people in tract 1} \\ w_T = \mbox{the total number of non-Reformed people in the Netherlands} \\ b_i = \mbox{the number of Reformed people in tract 1} \\ b_T = \mbox{the total number of Reformed people in the Netherlands}. \end{array}$ 

The second measurement that will be used is the interaction or exposure index, which measures the chance of a member of one group interacting with a member of another group in his or her place of residence. The formula used is as follows (Forest, 2005, p. 2):

$$B_{bw} = \sum \left( \frac{n_{ib}}{N_b} \right) \left( \frac{n_{iw}}{n_i} \right)$$

Where:

 $\begin{array}{l} n_{ib} \mbox{ = the number of Reformed people in the tract (municipality)} \\ n_{iw} \mbox{ = the number of non-Reformed people in the tract} \\ N_b \mbox{ = the number of Reformed people in the Netherlands} \\ n_i \mbox{ = the total population of the tract}. \end{array}$ 

Together, these measurements will shed some light on how segregated the Reformed people in the Netherlands are, and on how the various denominations differ in this regard.

# 4.3. The explanations for the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands

The conclusions in parts II and III give rise to the following hypotheses below, which can be tested to further investigate the reasons for the way the *Gere-formeerde* denominations developed and changed. Below, I will explain how these hypotheses will be tested and what information I will use to further explain what these hypotheses tell us.

## 4.3.1. All churches follow the same statistical development

As Dekker (1992, 2013) explains, the GKN and the GKv follow a very similar developmental pattern, with strong initial growth, a peak, subsequent stabilisation, and then a slow but steady decline. In order to illustrate this, and to compare the evolution of other churches, some figures will be presented with the peak of each denomination and the time between founding and peak, and the peak and the current situation. The chapter on this hypothesis will have to show us whether the hypothesis is true or false, also using an ANOVA (i.e., a test for comparing the means of three or more variables, for different time periods, in order to measure the differences). In order to explain why this hypothesis holds or fails, further literature will likewise be consulted.

## 4.3.2. Experientialist denominations have a more persistent and consistent growth than orthodox ones

In this chapter, the growth of the orthodox (GKN, GKv, NGK, CGK) and experientialist (GG, GGN, HHK, GB) denominations will be compared. Their development will be presented in graphs clearly showing the differences and similarities between the two. A two-sample t-test will also be carried out to determine whether the mean of the growth of the orthodox and experientialist churches differs significantly between the two. For a further account of the outcome of these tests, more literature will be consulted on the difference between experientialist and orthodox churches, in order to determine if these differences can account for the difference in development.

### 4.3.3. Growth in large cities is weaker than in rural areas

In order to test this hypothesis, several figures will be presented showing the growth of each denomination with different degrees of urbanisation. The urbanisation statistics have been taken from CBS, making it possible to compare our findings to information on the general Dutch population. The resulting graphs will show whether the different churches thrive more in rural areas, in cities, or in areas of medium urbanisation. An ANOVA will help to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the various areas of urbanisation.

## 4.3.4. Growth is stimulated by the presence of other denominations in the neighbourhood

The hypothesis postulated in chapter 23 holds that the presence of a similar church – for instance, an NGK in the neighbourhood of a GKv, or a GGN close to a GG – will be of positive impact on the growth of the church. A number of tests will help to determine whether these factors indeed make a difference. In this chapter, the Dutch Bible belt will also be described and analysed. Again, literature will need to be consulted to interpret these findings.

## 4.3.5. The presence of schools of a certain denomination stimulates the growth of local churches

Consistent with Bisin and Verdier's (2000) theory on intergenerational transfer of religious convictions, Reformed churches highly value education aimed at their specific theology and worldview. For this reason, several denominations have founded schools to assist their own members and often also those of related denominations in raising their children. As denomination-specific middle schools in particular can be quite rare, the hypothesis of this chapter is that many members allow their choice of location in the country to be influenced by the presence of schools. Using t-tests, this hypothesis will be tested and further explained using literature.

Part II The temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands from 1892 to 2015

## 5. Introduction to part II

The following part of this study will be devoted to the description of the temporal development of the Reformed denominations represented in the Kampen dataset. In this description, the development of membership numbers, the relative growth of each denomination, the proportion of baptised to confessing members, demographic statistics and border traffic with other denominations, and the number of local churches and their average size, will be described in a systematic way. Each chapter will be structured as follows:

- 1. A summary of statistics pertaining to each denomination, the development of membership numbers as provided by the administration of the denomination, including its relative growth, a comparison with the growth of the Dutch population, and a further examination of developments during any schisms or mergers that may have occurred;
- 2. The proportion of confessing members to baptised members. This is the only information that is available on the age profile of the churches. It is not much, but assuming that people make public confession of their faith around the age of twenty, we can compare this information to the demographic statistics on the Dutch population and give some indication as to how the age of church members compares to that of the majority population. Again, the assumptions made in regard to the age of Reformed church members may be more representative for some denominations than for others. After all, the age at which young people make public confession varies between denominations, depending on their traditions and theology. In this section, demographic statistics concerning baptisms, deaths, and number of public confessions will also be presented and discussed;
- 3. Information on border traffic with other denominations is also available for most churches. Here the numbers on people entering and leaving denominations will be presented, by confessing and baptised members. Most churches also specify where these members go or where they come from;
- 4. Finally, the number of local churches and local church size will be presented and discussed;
- 5. Each chapter will then end with a conclusion, wrapping up all the presented information and summarising the chapter.

There is one sidenote that needs to be made in regard to the Kampen dataset. Some chapters may not include all five of the steps outlined above, since the required information is not available for all denominations. The GKN, for instance, only published information on demographics and border traffic until 1993. In addition, the GKN has only registered the number of new members who join the church, and did not track how many people left. The GG has no demographic data on baptisms, confessions, or deaths before 2005, and the GGN is missing these statistics and all information on border traffic altogether. The HHK also lacks demographic and border traffic information, and since this denomination is very young and did not immediately start data collection, there is much information lacking. Finally, since data collection for the GB was very difficult (see the discussion in chapter 3 above), not all information can be presented and/or be entirely accurate.

As another sidenote, it should be observed that the dataset does not include all Reformed denominations. There are denominations that have not registered their membership numbers and demography, or whose information is difficult to access (see chapter 1.5 above).

## 5.1. Summary statistics of the Netherlands

In order to compare the data of the Reformed denominations with information on the Dutch population, a short discussion will first be presented on the statistical developments of the Netherlands, with special attention for the information that can be compared with the data on the denominations. These data are presented in ten-year periods for the sake of a quick overview. More details will be provided later on in this chapter.

Year	Population	Average growth per year over 10-year period	Birth rate (%)	Death rate (%)
1892	4,669,576		3.18%	2.08%
1900	5,082,433	0.95%	3.16%	1.79%
1910	5,832,252	1.45%	2.86%	1.36%
1920	6,802,041	1.50%	2.82%	1.23%
1930	7,795,591	1.30%	2.31%	0.91%
1940	8,821,802	1.24%	2.08%	0.99%
1950	9,992,726	1.22%	2.27%	0.75%
1960	11,377,158	1.30%	2.08%	0.76%
1970	12,938,963	1.28%	1.83%	0.84%
1980	14,040,922	0.86%	1.28%	0.81%
1990	14,900,485	0.60%	1.32%	0.86%
2000	15,864,131	0.62%	1.30%	0.88%
2010	16,574,989	0.45%	1.11%	0.82%
2015	16,914,740	0.43%	1.01%	0.87%

Year	% 0-19	% 20-44	% 45-64	% 65-79	% 80+
1900	44.36%	33.93%	15.71%	5.33%	0.69%
1910	44.02%	34.67%	15.19%	5.38%	0.73%
1920	42.43%	35.59%	16.05%	5.15%	0.77%
1930	40.29%	36.58%	17.04%	5.34%	0.75%
1940	37.54%	37.39%	18.13%	6.09%	0.85%
1950	37.32%	35.88%	19.11%	6.69%	1.00%
1960	37.93%	32.90%	20.24%	7.57%	1.35%
1970	35.95%	33.96%	19.98%	8.40%	1.71%
1980	31.45%	37.24%	19.85%	9.25%	2.21%
1990	25.66%	40.88%	20.66%	9.92%	2.87%
2000	24.41%	37.67%	24.35%	10.41%	3.15%
2010	23.70%	33.12%	27.87%	11.40%	3.91%
2015	22.65%	31.42%	28.13%	13.45%	4.35%

Table 5.1. Summary statistics of the Netherlands

As table 5.1. shows, the Dutch population grew from nearly five million to almost seventeen million between 1892 and 2015. The growth is stable, although a marked decrease does become visible from the 1970s onwards. Before this period, population growth hovers on average somewhere between 1.2% and 1.5% annually. By 1980, the growth falls below 1% and from there it continues to decline.

The birth rate, presented after the growth, can shed some light on this development, as these numbers also show a strong decrease from 1980 onwards. The sudden decline in births is due to the sexual revolution, the marked surge in the use and acceptance of contraceptive methods, and changing male-female relationships in Dutch society occurring in the 1960s. The death rate has also decreased notably since 1892, indicating rising life standards and longer life expectancy.

These numbers are also reflected in the age ranges of the Dutch population. The youngest group, composed of 0-20 year-olds, used to be the largest, but by 1980 the next group, aged 20-45, has become larger. By 2010-2015, however, this group is shrinking, and although it is still larger than the category of 0-20 year-olds, it is also on its way to becoming smaller than the group of 45-65 year-olds. The oldest two groups, 65-80 and 80+, are rapidly increasing. All of this indicates that the Dutch population is becoming older, which development has been observed and is closely being tracked (CBS, 2019).

All of these data can be examined in greater detail. The first statistic to be presented in each chapter is the development of membership numbers for the Reformed denomination in question, which will then be compared to the development of the Dutch population, as presented in figure 5.1:



Figure 5.1. The development of the Dutch population

This figure shows that the Dutch population started with 4.5 million inhabitants in 1892 and grew steadily to almost seventeen million in 2015. One small anomaly can be found in 1898-1899. This may be due to the measles and influenza epidemic of the time, although it seems more likely that there is an error in the data, as the data up to 1899 come from another source in the CBS repository (CBS, 2020) than the data after 1900 (CBS, 2018b). The Dutch growth increased somewhat after 1945, but regained its normal development several years later. The Dutch population has kept increasing, albeit at a slower rate after 1960. This is also clearly visible in the relative annual growth of the Dutch population:



Figure 5.2. The growth of the Dutch population

Figure 5.2. shows the relative growth of the Dutch population for each year. The first detail of note here is that the growth stayed above zero for the entire period presented, although it did decrease, as the trendline shows. There are also some other points of note, for instance the lower than usual growth towards the end of World War I. Of decisive influence here was the Spanish flu. Another decrease in growth occurred between 1940 and 1946, immediately followed by a peak in 1946-1950, when a baby boom occurred, also visible in figure 5.3, showing the birth rates in the Netherlands. After this period, however, the growth normalised and hovered around 1.5% for several decades, until it decreased to below 1% in 1980 and continued to decline from there.



Figure 5.3. The birth and death rates in the Dutch population

The growth of the Dutch population is, of course, related to the numbers of deaths and births, which are presented above in figure 5.3. It shows initially a high death rate and high birth rate, but the birth rate has always been much higher than the death rate. Both rates show dips and peaks around the wars; World War I and II both show an increase in deaths, followed almost immediately by a peak in births.

In 1974, the birth rate started to decline suddenly and strongly, under influence of the popularisation of birth control and the sexual revolution. From 1980 onwards, the birth and death rates increasingly started approaching each other. The birth rate seems to decrease even more after 2005, becoming only slightly higher than the death rate. The death rate, on the other hand, has remained largely stable ever since it settled around 0.8% in 1947.

As has already been noted, the age ranges of the Dutch population also have changed through the years:


Figure 5.4. The age demographics of the Netherlands

This graph shows the Dutch population divided into age groups as per CBS categories. Here the same observations can be made that were already expected based on the summary statistics: The youngest group of the Dutch population, 0-20 years old, started out as the largest population group. After this, in World War II, it became slightly smaller than the group between the age of 20 and 45, only to grow again with the baby boom after the war. However, in 1974 this youngest group started to shrink, and the group aged 20 to 45 started to increase significantly, until it became larger. This, again, had to do with the advent of contraception and the emancipation of women. By 2003, also the group of 45 to 65 year-olds became larger than the youngest group, and seems to be on track to become larger than the 20 to 45 year-olds as well. The two oldest groups also show an increase from 1960 onwards.

The statistics presented above present a picture of the Dutch population as a growing whole, with a steady but declining growth, which can be ascribed in part to declining birth rates as a result of women's emancipation and the sexual revolution. The death rate is steady, but decreasing birth rates mean that the population as a whole is aging, with growing groups of older people. Whereas young people used to be the dominant group, their place has slowly come to be taken by the growing groups of older members.

The remainder of part II will be devoted to similar statistics for Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, which will be compared to the information above to determine whether the denominations show a corresponding development.

# 6. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

The first denomination to be described is the GKN. It is the largest denomination in the Kampen dataset, with one of the longer histories, and the only one that no longer exists, as a result of the merger with the NHK and ELK to form the PKN. This chapter shows how the life cycle of a denomination develops from initial growth to steady membership, which remains stable for quite some time, before the numbers start to dwindle and, in this case, the denomination disbands. As the NHK had almost three times as many members as the GKN, the latter sort of dissolved in the PKN. After the merger, a declining number of congregations still referred to themselves as *Gereformeerd*, preferring to rebrand themselves as *Protestant* after fusing with local *Hervormde* churches. This does not mean that the characteristics of the GKN disappeared, but the reality is that it has still become difficult to find these characteristics back in the group to which they now belong. For that reason, the analysis for the GKN ends with the year 2004.

## 6.1. Data description and analysis

The data for the GKN have been summarised and described using various graphic representations in the hope of making the results insightful and clear. A first step is to examine the summary descriptive statistics. The table below presents the total number of members for the year in question in the first column, followed by the average annual growth in the preceding ten years, the percentage of the total Dutch population constituted by the denomination's members, the number of local congregations, the number of Dutch municipalities with one or more GKN churches, and, finally, the average number of members in each local congregation:

Year	Membership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch popula- tion	Local churches	Municipalities with GKNs	Members per church
1892	328,240	-	7.03%	671	255	489
1900	362,562	1.79%	7.13%	675	260	537
1910	418,283	1.47%	7.17%	689	267	607
1920	492,927	1.58%	7.25%	707	276	697
1930	561,799	1.28%	7.21%	724	280	776
1940	640,102	1.33%	7.26%	757	285	846
1950	667,202	0.37%	6.68%	785	291	850
1960	751,399	1.17%	6.6%	805	292	933
1970	859,993	1.39%	6.65%	819	301	1,050
1980	867,103	0.19%	6.18%	810	314	1,071
1990	792,367	-0.82%	5.32%	835	332	949
2000	673,926	-1.54%	4.25%	840	341	802

Table 6.1. Summary statistics of the GKN

This table shows a growth of membership, which remained strong each year until 1980, when it weakened and later turned to decline. The share of the Dutch population decreased, too; the growth of the GKN did not keep steady relative to the growth of the Dutch population. The number of local churches increased, as did the number of municipalities with GKN congregations. The average number of members per church increased greatly from 489 in 1892 to 1,070 in 1980, when the GKN were at their peak. This means that local churches became larger and larger, until they at a certain point in time started to shrink again. We do need to take into account that, at a certain point, when membership started to decline, the data registration also became less accurate. Members who no longer participated in church did not necessarily notify their church, with the result that they were still officially listed as members but would not classify themselves as such. It is in the best interests of congregations to maintain a reliable membership administration, as financial contributions owed to the national organisation are based on membership numbers. In reality, however, keeping track of which members are actively involved and which are not has proved difficult. Such 'paper membership' is a bigger problem in some denominations than in others. The GKN are one such denomination where the discrepancy between church membership and church attendance becomes fairly large in later years – that is, for a *Gereformeerde* denomination (see also chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of this topic).

In the remainder of this chapter, we will examine the numbers presented above more carefully and add more detail and graphical representations to them.

# 6.2. Development of membership numbers



Let us first, at a most basic level, consider the development of the total GKN membership:

Figure 6.1. The development of membership in the GKN

Most interesting about this graph is that it presents the development of the entire life cycle of a church, almost from its very inception up to its final years. The first available data come from the year 1892, when the GKN had 328,240 members. In the final year of the GKN's existence as a separate church, rather than a part of the PKN, they had 650,892 members, an increase of 80%. In 1973, however, the GKN was at its absolute peak, with 874,497 members, amounting to 266% of the starting value from 1892.

The notable lack of growth from the early 1970s onwards is also clear when the development of the GKN is compared to that of the Dutch population. The lack of growth from 1973 onwards shows that the GKN did not follow the Dutch population as a whole, which grew every single year by a few percent. This view is confirmed by what was noted earlier, namely that the GKN share of the Dutch population decreased over time. For a more complete picture, the development of the GKN and of the Dutch population have been mapped in figure 6.2:



Figure 6.2. The development of the Dutch population and GKN membership

This graph shows that the GKN clearly kept up with the growth of the Netherlands until 1944, when the *Vrijmaking* led to a 10% decrease in numbers. After that, the growth of the GKN kept running parallel to the development of the Dutch population until 1974, when GKN growth turned to decrease and the GKN broke entirely with the growth of the Dutch population.

The relative growth of the GKN is shown in figure 6.3 below, which unveils a fairly stable development, with the exception of a few dips in 1926 and 1944. From the latter date, the growth declined and became a decrease from 1974 onwards, ending with a decrease of almost 2% per year.



Figure 6.3. The relative growth of the GKN and the Netherlands

In what follows, I will discuss the development of membership numbers in the GKN, especially in relation to their history as set out in chapter 2.

#### From 1892 to Geelkerken

These early years were a complex period of extensive change and growth, and a lot of work to get the new denomination to work. There were a lot of places where the merger took several years to be executed, and, of course, there were large differences that needed to be overcome. Elaborate instructions were issued by the general synod for how this might be done. For some time, Afgescheiden and Dolerende churches coexisted in many places, before slowly disappearing. By 1911, most of them had fused and cultural and social differences started to diminish. An elaborate discussion of this period can be found in Te Velde (1992). During these years, the GKN experienced a stable growth of, on average, 1.5% annually. The available data show a dip followed by a peak in 1908-1909, but those years saw no schisms that could have influenced the growth of the GKN that much. While the GB was indeed founded in 1906 and the GG in 1907, it seems unlikely that these events could have had such a strong influence on the GKN. As the 1908 decrease was neutralised again in 1909, the issue seems to be an error in data collection rather than anything else. According to Te Velde (1992, p. 40), the numbers reflect a cleaning up of the administration, as the *Dolerende* churches had included members of the *Hervormde* church who had in the end not joined the *Doleantie*. Interestingly, the increasing membership numbers were hardly dampened by the conflict of 1926. The denomination grew by 8,573 members between 1925 and 1926, lost 146 members between 1926 and 1927, and then continued to grow by 4,005 members in 1927-1928 and was then back on track. However, although the 146-member decrease seems small in comparison to the membership of the GKN (hv), which totalled 5,492 in 1927 (Aalders, 2012, p. 306), it must be kept in mind that the growth of the GKN was indeed stunted for a year, as the normal increase of around 8,000 members did not take place. Not all of these people will have gone to the GKN (hv), but the number of almost 5,500 mentioned by Aalders can be accounted for by the Kampen dataset. These numbers agree with those in the yearbooks that the GKN (hv) published between 1927 and 1942, which show the following development:



Figure 6.4. The development of membership in the GKN (hv)

This graph shows that, for the time covered by the yearbooks, the GKN (hv) have grown in size, from around 5,500 members to over 7,000. Data for later years are not available, but the growth of the denomination seems to have been stable over the years, until its members joined the NHK. There were a total of 26 local congregations, indicating that this denomination never was one of the larger ones.

#### The Vrijmaking

The GKN quickly recovered from the Geelkerken case, at least in terms of membership numbers. Their growth continued until 1944, when membership reached a peak of 684,932 members. The following year is shrouded in some mystery. No GKN yearbook exists for 1945, which would have reported the data for 1944. Those data have therefore been interpolated by taking the numbers from the yearbooks for 1944 and 1946 and calculating an average for 1945. However, since 1944 was a year different from all other years, the resulting numbers may not be entirely reflective of reality.

The GKv started publishing yearbooks in 1946, when they included information on 1944 and 1945. During the war, in the period from July 1944 to May 1945, the GKv gained 47,011 members. By 1946, they had 77,350 members. The GKN yearbooks reflects a loss of around 52,300 members between 1944 and 1946. This leaves around 25,000 members who also joined the GKv but are not directly accounted for by the decline in GKN membership. However, if one recalls that the GKN had grown steadily by around 10,000 members per year until 1944, a growth which was absent in 1944-1945, one can add an additional 20,000 members to those who left the GKN. If these members are included in the membership losses of those years, the initial memberships numbers for the GKv can be sufficiently accounted for.

Combining the number of members in the GKN, GKv, and NGK, I tried to reconstruct the schism of 1944 and to determine whether the visible gap in the GKN in 1944 can be covered by the members of the GKv which emerged that year, resulting in the following figure:



Figure 6.5. The development of the GKN compared to the development of the GKN, GKv, and NGK combined

This figure shows that, statistically, the GKN would have gone through a very similar development if the GKv had not left. To complete the picture, the NGK, which left the GKv in 1967, have also been added to this graph. The dips still

visible for the years 1944 and 1968 can probably be accounted for by an initial lack in data collection when new churches are founded. Had the schism of 1944 not happened, total membership would have peaked at almost one million in 1978, postponing the decline of the GKN by a few years. However, thereafter the GKN would probably still have started to dwindle and decline. According to this model, the GKN would have had around 800,000 members in 2003. This is all speculation, however, as the presence of those who would later form the GKV and NGK might have had an effect on the theological and demographic development of the GKN in ways that cannot be mapped using the available information.

#### The peak of 1973 and later years

After the *Vrijmaking*, the GKN continued to grow. By 1952, their membership was restored to pre-*Vrijmaking* levels. This development was also aided by a group of 2,901 people who returned to the GKN because they did not feel at home in the GKv after all. Thereafter, another period of growth followed, lasting until 1973 when the GKN reached theirits absolute peak of 874,497 members. Up to 1973, the average growth was 6,596 annually, although the growth between 1969 and 1971 already started to diminish. Although the church was still growing in this period, the growth goes from 10,000 per year to 4,530 in 1973 and 94 in 1974. The church shrank each year until 1977 and had its last year of growth with +13 members in 1978. After 1978, the number of members started to decrease drastically, with an average growth of -11,472 members per year between 1979 and 2003.

### 6.3. Demographic statistics

In addition to the information on the development of the total number of members, there are several other types of data available on the members of the GKN, the demographic development and the traffic between the GKN and other churches.

The first interesting statistic is the proportion of confessing members and baptised members:



Figure 6.6. The proportion of baptised and confessing members in the GKN

A first note needs to be made that the numbers of confessing members and baptised members were not registered before 1913 and are inaccurate until 1917, which is why figure 6.5 starts in 1918. There are several salient points in this graph. First of all, the GKN started with a higher proportion of baptised members (55% in 1918) than confessing members (44% in 1918). These numbers do not add up to 100%, but the rest may have been guest members or birth members: people who were registered either as a regular visitor but who did not live in the place where they are registered, or small children who are members but had not been baptised vet. Assuming that people become confessing members at around twenty years old, this means that GKN members were quite young at the beginning of its history. However, after this initial high number, the proportions changed, until in 1938 they were equal at 50% each. After that, the share of baptised members continued to fall and the confessing members increased, until in 2003 their ratio was 60% confessing members and 40% baptised members. Causes of this change are the decrease in family size, better overall healthcare, and people who either waited with doing confession or did not do it at all for reasons like not wanting to bind themselves or commit to something as large as the church.



Figure 6.7. Baptised members in the GKN and the under twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

In addition to the preceding figure, a comparison can be made of the percentage of baptised members in the GKN and the number of people in the Dutch population who are under twenty years old, a statistic that the CBS (2018b) helpfully has available from 1950 onwards. It shows that the percentage of people in the Netherlands who are younger than twenty dropped from 37% in 1950 to 23% in 2015 with a steep fall between 1965 and 1992, after which the number stabilised somewhat, a possible relationship to the sexual revolution and the introduction of contraception. The percentage of baptised members in the GKN decreased as well, dropping from 47% in 1950 to 40% in 2003. The decrease in the GKN was therefore much more gradual and less sudden than it was in the Netherlands; the proportion of baptised members remained stable until around 1975, when it began to drop from 46% to reach 40% in the 1990s. This indicates that the decline in births was perhaps inspired by the general decline in the Dutch population, suggesting that the use of contraception had taken a hold in the GKN as well, but that they still maintained a larger share of young people than the Dutch population. An alternative explanation is that fewer young people were making public confession of their faith and attending church, and also failed to request the secretary to remove them from the administration records. As such, these young people would still have been registered as members, even though they no longer considered themselves such. Such a pattern may in fact be suggested when we consider the number of baptisms and confessions with a twenty year gap:



Figure 6.8. Baptisms and confessions in the GKN, with a twenty year lag

This graph shows that the number of baptisms is generally significantly higher than the number of confessions twenty years later, indicating that not everyone who was baptised went on to make public confession of faith. By 1993, the number of confessions is no less than 67% lower than the number of baptisms that took place twenty years earlier.

To delve a little deeper into this matter, we need the demographic data of which the GKN kept record between 1947 and 1993. Unfortunately, the yearbooks include no data for later years, possibly due to growing optimism about the *Samen op Weg* process nearing completion (GKN, 1994, p. 563) and the declining value of an administration separate from the NHK, with which the GKN was to merge. In those years, Kaski also made statistical reports on Dutch churches, which again made the need for the GKN to collect their own data less pressing. In addition, other forms of membership that did not fit the existing statistical format for data collection started to emerge, like child dedication or people who chose not to become confessing members through public confession but still participated in regular church life. Such factors made data collection more difficult and less accurate. Instead, the GKN chose to focus on a reevaluation of their membership and of their place in society, which was changing rapidly due to secularisation (F. Rozemond, personal communication, January 26, 2021).

The demographic data collected until 1993 do contain information of note, however, although the fact that the GKN stopped their administration might be indicative of a diminishing reliability. This has to be taken into account when the data are interpreted.

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths	Total incoming members	Total outgoing
1950	14,697	9,275	3,717	5,376	2,386
1960	16,660	9,628	4,969	3,657	2,758
1970	16,624	9,657	6,305	2,235	4,150
1980	10,718	7,974	6,075	2,626	6,346
1990	7,794	5 <i>,</i> 387	6,382	2,462	8,139

Table 6.2. Summary of the demographic statistics for the GKN

The number of baptisms, for instance, was always higher than the number of public confessions. This means not all members who were baptised as children actually made public confession of their faith at any age, pointing to an exodus of baptised members or to a larger percentage of baptised members older than twenty, making the comparison to under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands more difficult. A high number of baptisms is indicative of a high birth rate:



Figure 6.9. The demographic statistics of the GKN

The graph in figure 6.9 shows a strong decrease in birth numbers. With this decrease, one would expect a decrease in the number of baptised members as well. However, this does not seem to be the case. As we saw earlier (figure 6.6), the number of people under the age of twenty was still higher in the GKN than in the Netherlands in general, while later statistics published by the PKN (2013b, p. 9) clearly show that the PKN membership was on average older than the Dutch population. Of course, these data do include the NHK, but they can be used as an indicator for the demographic composition of the GKN. Something

else must therefore have been going on to account for the gap between the low birth rate and the high number of baptised members. One possible answer is the presence of baptised members who were still registered as such, but had left the church. Another possibility is that many people did remain active members of the church, but did not do public confession.

The birth rates and death rates of the GKN can be explored further by comparing them to those of the overall Dutch population:



Figure 6.10. Births and deaths in the Netherlands and the GKN

Figure 6.10 shows the births and deaths as a percentage of the entire GKN membership along with the same statistic for the general Dutch population. Several interesting observations can be made here. The data start in 1947, when birth rates in the Netherlands were higher than they were in the GKN. However, as chapter 5 showed, the birth rate in the Netherlands was unusually high that year, due to the post-World War II baby boom. The birth rate of the Netherlands then normalised, becoming slightly lower than that of the GKN by 1952. After that year, the birth rates in the Netherlands and the GKN stayed virtually the same. The GKN also joined the Netherlands when birth rates declined in the 1970s, but after that, the birth rate in the GKN continued to drop and ended up lower than that of the Dutch population. This might be accounted for by the ageing membership of the GKN, as young members left and no longer had their children baptised.

Whereas the Dutch birth rate was still markedly higher than the death rate in 1993, the statistics for the GKN show the lines almost crossing and the number of deaths overtaking the number of births. Unfortunately, as no data are available for the period after 1993, we cannot see how this trend developed further, although one might safely assume that the birth rate continued to drop. The death rate in the GKN closely followed that of the Netherlands in general, although it started a little lower before fully catching up by 1985. This is remarkable, as an aging group might be expected to show higher death rates. This was probably prevented at this stage by the high birth rates from earlier. Again, however, the data may be unreliable, especially since we are dealing here with data that the GKN stopped collecting in 1993 for unknown reasons.

The sudden decrease in births in the GKN from 1971 onwards may in large part also have been responsible for the turn from growth to decline occurring in the GKN around 1974. As the birth rate in the GKN dropped below that of the Netherlands and the GKN death rate seems to have risen above that of the Netherlands after 1993, this may also help to explain why growth in the GKN dropped below the growth in the Netherlands. Another possible explanation is the border traffic in the GKN, which we will present below.

#### 6.4. Border traffic in the GKN

The second feature of interest is the ratio of incoming to outgoing GKN members. These numbers pertain to the people who come from or go to other denominations, which means that the internal traffic between local GKN churches is not taken into account. A first salient fact is that the number of incoming and outgoing people roughly coincide, which, in combination with the high birth rates, accounts in part for the growth of the GKN. Interestingly, the number of incoming and outgoing members increased until 1975, but then started to decrease again. This means that the decline in the GKN cannot be explained by border traffic alone. The growth of the GKN, then, is due more to a birth surplus than a positive migration balance. It should also be mentioned that Reformed churches generally do not have non-Western members, meaning that all members are native Dutch people. The growth in the Dutch population, which was more the product of immigration than high birth rates, therefore does not apply to the GKN. More information on this topic can be found in the introduction to Part IV of this study.



Figure 6.11. Baptised and confessing members entering and leaving the GKN

In addition to the total numbers of people entering and leaving the GKN, there is also more detailed information available on the border traffic with other denominations. Interestingly, the GKN only kept track of the origin of incoming members but did not register the destination of their outgoing members. However, the available information on incoming members alone is already quite interesting:



Figure 6.12. Incoming GKN members by church of origin

Clearly, the GKN had the most traffic with the NHK denomination. Since this was the denomination from which the GKN originated and with which it in the end merged, there appear to have been many people who felt a strong enough tie to the GKN to leave the NHK for it, although it may also be that people left the NHK because they disagreed with its teachings or no longer felt at home there. The process that started in the 1960s, when GKN and NHK ministers started to discuss possible cooperation, ending in the establishment of the PKN, will also have helped in this. In addition, the NHK simply was a very large church with high degrees of heterogeneity, which may have been attractive to prospective members. The numbers also reflect the GKy, although incoming traffic from this denomination was not large. Here too, however, peaks are visible in 1950 and 1968, showing that a number of GKy members were not too happy about the schisms that had occurred. Small numbers of people entered the GKN from other churches.. The highest category after the NHK and GKv is probably represented by people who came from no other denomination and thus came to the GKN after a conversion. These observations show that new GKN members generally stayed within the left-hand corner of Polderman's (1996) model, where the more moderate denominations can be found. The figure above suggests that the GKN and NHK never severed ties completely, as a notable number of members crossed their borders. Incoming members from the GKv declined notably over the years, showing that the two denominations increasingly drifted apart over time.

Even though data on the destination churches of outgoing members were never published by the GKN in their yearbooks nor available in the Kampen dataset, the information published by other churches in the dataset can be arranged to give an indication from 1962 onwards:



Figure 6.13. Outgoing GKN members by church of destination

Unfortunately, there are no data available on the NHK, which presumably will have been the most frequent destination for outgoing GKN members, and the other data are only available for select years. However, figure 6.13 does show that the CGK was the most popular destination for people leaving the GKN. Since the CGK was founded over disagreement with the *Vereniging* of 1892, this is an interesting statistic. In later years, however, the differences vis-à-vis the GKN became less relevant, and CGK members apparently found enough common ground with the latter to move between the two denominations. More GKN members – in fact, roughly three times as many – went to the CGK than the other way around. It may be that the changing theology of the GKN led some members to seek a denomination that had a more literal view on the Bible. As we will see in chapter 7, however, the CGK have always shown strong growth. Some of this growth was constituted by entire local congregations changing denominational affiliation, usually from the GKN. The statistics on outgoing GKN members might be reflected here.

There were also people who left the GKN for the GKv, although the numbers leaving for the NGK were generally higher than for those leaving for the GKv. Apparently, the relationship between the GKN and the GKv remained an uneasy one. There was some border traffic with the GG, but it was very limited. The CGK clearly represented the easier option.

It should be kept in mind that there probably also was a lot of traffic with the NHK, as we saw in figure 6.11. Assuming that the traffic with the NHK is roughly equal in both directions, there would have been 1,500-2,000 GKN members going to the NHK each year. However, these statistics are not available in the Kampen dataset and the assumption cannot be proved.

## 6.5. The development of local churches

Finally, there are two further statistics to describe relating to the number of local churches and their size. First of all, figure 6.13 shows the number of local churches, which grew gradually from the inception of the GKN until a dip in 1972-1990, from which the church, interestingly enough, recovered. The development of the number of local churches also does not reflect the overall decrease in membership numbers:



Figure 6.14. The number of local churches in the GKN

Figure 6.14 shows the number of local churches in the entire denomination. The lowest number of local congregations the GKN had was 667 in 1892. In 1996, there were 852 congregations, which was the highest number in GKN history. After that, the number decreased somewhat to 839 in 2003.

Similarly interesting is the interaction between the number of GKN members and the number of local GKN congregations. Figure 6.15 shows this in some detail.



Figure 6.15. The average number of members per local church in the GKN

The GKN started out with churches of around 500 members, but this number grew drastically until the churches shrank a little in 1944, from almost 900 to 820. The growth continued after that, until GKN churches averaged over 1,000 members in 1974. As we have seen above in this chapter, the numbers then started to drop drastically, until local congregations averaged only 775 members in the final years before the PKN merger. Although the GKN have always had a certain missionary zeal, this did not necessarily express itself in a specific church planting policy (for more information on this topic, see Schaeffer & Geertsema, 2017). The growth in local congregations shown in figure 6.14 is therefore not the result of anything planned. Instead, this seems to be a question of a natural development in Reformed denominations, as we will see it many more times in the course of this work.

#### 6.6. Conclusions

Taking all of the above into consideration, we might sketch the development of the GKN as follows. It started out as a large denomination. Until around 1960, the development of the GKN virtually paralleled the growth of the Dutch population in general, but then started to decline. The growth of the GKN occurred at a steady pace, but stabilised and stopped in the 1970s. Growth ended for good in 1974, when membership numbers started to decline. This might be linked to changes in GKN theology, from a strict, traditional orthodox view on Scripture and the Forms of Unity to more lenient views, when a more modern stance on

authoritative texts and contentious issues was officially acknowledged by the report *God met ons*. This trend receives greater depth from other statistical information, as worried GKN members left for the CGK, or, to a lesser degree, the GKv.

Apart from the natural development of GKN membership numbers, the data also showed several moments of disruption. The first disruption came in 1926, when Geelkerken was suspended and deposed from the GKN. He started a new group of churches with around 5,500 members, although the exact number of people who actually left the GKN that year is difficult to estimate. In 1944, the *Vrijmaking* occurred, when a group of people left the GKN to found the GKv. Around 77,000 members seem to have left the GKN for the GKv in the years following the *Vrijmaking*. Interestingly, since 1944 there have been no further schisms in the GKN, a marked contrast to other churches, as we will see later. The final important event which influenced the development of the GKN was the establishment of the PKN, when the GKN merged with the NHK and the Lutheran church.

The proportion of confessing members to baptised members is also interesting. The GKN denomination started out with a higher share of baptised members than confessing members; however, this changed around 1938, when confessing members first represented a higher proportion of the total and continued to do so thereafter. Death rates increased throughout the years and the number of baptisms declined. The decrease in baptisms occurred almost simultaneously with the start of the decline in the GKN membership. Although data are not available after 1993, it seems likely that the death rate overtook the baptism rate after around 1995, accounting in large part for the decline that had set in starting in 1974. The church started out as a young community with many births and few deaths and with considerable growth among its youthful membership, but this changed over the course of the years. The church started to age and therefore lose members, as death rates rose and the church became less attractive to younger people.

# 7. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

The second denomination to be discussed in this study is the CGK. In terms of numbers it is much smaller than the GKN, and, as will become clear below, it passed through a markedly different development. The CGK denomination is still in existence today, and is also one of the older denominations in the dataset. In what follows, I will give a description of the temporal development of the CGK, with special attention to their growth, demography, and border traffic. A thorough and interesting discussion on the statistical development of the CGK can also be found in Vennik (2015), who explores the background to decreasing membership in this denomination and tries to find possibilities for growth.

### 7.1. Data description and analysis

The data on the CGK membership totals are available from 1919 onwards. The numbers for confessing members and baptised members are reliable starting in 1948. The numbers from before that year do not add up to the totals, diverging by far. All data are missing for 1944 and 1945, and have been interpolated by taking the average values of the surrounding years. Demographic information is available between 1962 and 2015. The descriptions and analysis below have been made on the basis of these data.

Year	Membership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch popula- tion	Local churches	Municipalities with CGKs	Local church size
1920	14,798		0.22%	63	59	235
1930	34,243	10.86%	0.44%	112	98	306
1940	43,753	2.7%	0.5%	134	112	327
1950	54,624	2.01%	0.55%	148	118	369
1960	63,244	1.42%	0.56%	167	122	379
1970	69,632	1.03%	0.54%	174	128	400
1980	74,426	0.73%	0.53%	175	130	425
1990	75,844	0.24%	0.51%	185	137	410
2000	74,569	-0.17%	0.47%	187	140	396
2010	73,839	-0.19%	0.45%	179	137	412
2015	71,869	-0.35%	0.42%	177	136	406

Table 7.1. Summary statistics of the CGK

The number of members in the CGK increased until around 1990. After that, the number slowly started to decline. From 2000 onwards, it also becomes clear that the average annual growth became negative. The share of the population constituted by the CGK also decreased, as did the number of local churches and

municipalities with CGK churches. The only statistic that continued to increase is average congregation size.

# 7.2. Development of membership numbers

The development of CGK membership numbers can be seen in figure 7.1:



Figure 7.1. The development of membership in the CGK

The CGK were founded in 1892 with three local congregations. They attracted more and more churches and individuals, and started to grow at a fast and steady pace. This is a natural phenomenon which can also be observed in the other denominations; when a denomination is founded, new local churches are established at a high pace. Starting out with 14,798 members in 1920, their CGK numbers kept increasing until they had 76,274 members in 1985. After that, the growth halted and decline set in. Between 1985 and 2015, the CGK frequently experienced years of growth, but there were also years of decline, most notably in 2006 (+1034), 2004 (-1062), and 2013 (-1138). In 2015, the CGK had a total of 71,869 members. Over the entire course of time for which data are available for the CGK, there has been an increase of 780%. However, the CGK initially experienced a very strong growth, which makes this statistic somewhat meaningless. But from 1948 onwards (when numbers of confessing and baptised members start to be accurate and data collection for the GKy and GG also begins), the CGK membership shows an increase of 137%. Even between the membership peak and the current total, there is a decrease of only 5%.

Since the CGK represent a smaller denomination and have always been careful to keep their differences internal instead of giving reason to split, their history has seen no great upheavals. One schism did occur in 1952, when Rev. J.G. van Minnen founded the Christelijke Gereformeerde Gemeenten, but his efforts were unsuccessful. While other ministers did also leave the CGK around that time, none of this is visible in the statistics.

It is also useful to compare the growth of the CGK to that of the Dutch population. As we saw above, the share of the Dutch population represented by the CGK increased until the 1960s, after which it started to drop off. This comparison between the CGK and the Netherlands is presented in figure 7.2:



Figure 7.2. The development of the Dutch population and CGK membership

The development of the CGK and the Netherlands is presented on an index in this graph, where the 1925 value has been set as one, since the growth had normalised by then. CGK growth was clearly always steeper than that of the Dutch population, until around 1980. After that, CGK growth decreased to such an extent that it became smaller than that of the Netherlands.

The relative annual growth can also be compared to that of the Netherlands, as detailed in the following figure:



Figure 7.3. The relative growth of the CGK and the Netherlands

A first salient detail is that the growth of the CGK has been very unsteady. Especially in the beginning, the data reflect both years of extreme growth and years where growth even fell below zero. This is probably an effect of still uncertain data collection, as well as the higher traffic accompanying the foundation of denominations. The Dutch population experienced a much more steady development, with growth hovering around 1%. However, as the trendline shows, the growth of the Netherlands slowly decreased. The same goes for the CGK. Growth declined until 1985, when it fell below zero and became a decrease, initially small but steadily advancing.

# 7.3. Demographic statistics

Apart from the overall growth of the CGK, there are also data available on the demographic makeup of this denomination. The first statistic to be discussed here is the ratio of baptised members to confessing members. This will give an impression of the age of members, birth rate levels, and the proportion of young to older people who leave the church. This first statistic is presented below in figure 7.4, beginning in 1948, for which the data are first reliable.



Figure 7.4. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the CGK

As is visible in the above graphical representation of the data, the CGK started out with more baptised members than confessing members, indicating that the denomination was young, barring the occasional older baptised member; more than 50% of the people were around twenty years old or younger. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were also adult baptised members, who did not feel worthy enough to make a public confession of their faith. This may also have been of influence on the statistics shown above. The proportion of baptised to confessing members did not change until 1962, when the percentage of baptised members first dropped below 50%. After that, the number of baptised members continued to decrease and the number of confessing members kept rising, until the ratio reached 38% to 62% in 2015. This change in distribution indicates that the CGK membership has on the whole grown older than it was in the beginning, although it has not aged as much as the Dutch population, as figure 7.5 shows:



Figure 7.5. Baptised members in the CGK and under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

The figure above shows the relationship between Dutch people under the age of twenty and the percentage of baptised members in the CGK, where the latter represent a comparable group on the assumption that people make public confession of their faith around the age of twenty. The Dutch population shows a steep drop between 1965 and 1990, from 37% of under-twenty-year-olds to 23%. The CGK statistics show a much more gradual decline, but a decline none-theless, from 53% in 1950 to 38% in 2015. The relative difference is therefore smaller than it is in the Dutch population, but it is still unmistakable. Either young people were leaving the church, or birth rates were declining, or both. This phenomenon can be seen in more detail when the number of births is compared to the number of confessions with a twenty-year lag:



Figure 7.6. Baptisms and confessions in the CGK with a twenty-year lag

The gap between the two is much smaller than it was for the GKN, with an average difference between the two of 33%. This number remains fairly stable over the period examined.

A look at more detailed demographic statistics might give us some idea of the exact nature of the growth of the CGK (see table 7.2). The number of baptisms, for instance, was always higher than that of confessions, even up to 2015, showing that not all baptised members made public confession.

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths	Total incoming	Total outgoing
1962	1,399	720	397	729	971
1970	1,561	826	567	1,104	1,077
1980	1,243	994	560	1,016	1,339
1990	1,305	966	667	1,050	1,641
2000	1,156	814	726	1,059	1,485
2010	1,086	752	615	1,263	1,510
2015	1,020	612	598	1,242	1,602

Table 7.2. Summary of the demographic statistics for the CGK

More confessing members died each year (576 on average) than baptised members (37). The death rate has always been lower than the birth rate, which, under normal demographic circumstances, should imply growth, but, as we saw in the previous section, there has been very little actual growth after 1985. Likewise of note is that the death rate for 1970 is roughly 40% higher than it is for 1962. In 1976 (figure 7.8), it is even higher. The year 1970 is also the only year with a positive balance in border traffic. It is possible that the 1960s saw many worried GKN members moving over to the CGK.



Figure 7.7. The demographic statistics of the CGK

The number of baptisms decreased gradually through the years, affecting the decline after 1985. The death rate increased steadily from the beginning of data collection, leading to a lower birth surplus in general. The number of confessions was lower than the number of baptisms, even with a twenty-year lag, showing that baptised members were disappearing somewhere along the way before doing public confession.

These demographic statistics can also be compared to those of the Dutch population:



Figure 7.8. Births and deaths in the Netherlands and the CGK

The difference between the CGK and the Netherlands is clearly visible. The birth rate of the CGK started higher than that of the Dutch population. Although it did fall somewhat when the birth rate of the Dutch population decreased in 1974, it did not decline to the same extent and remained higher overall. The death rate in the CGK started out lower than in the Dutch population, but overtook the Dutch death rate around 1990. These details suggest that the growth of the CGK, which has been shown to be larger than the growth of the Netherlands, may have been due to higher birth rates and – until 1990 – lower death rates. In combination with the decreasing share of baptised members which emerged from figure 7.4, the image we get is that of an ageing population. The change from growth to decline in the CGK in 1986 only occurred gradually, but may be explained by the gradual decrease in births and the increase in deaths in the CGK, as well as their border traffic, which will be discussed next.

#### 7.4. Border traffic in the CGK

The CGK yearbooks also keep track of information on new members coming from other denominations and members who leave the CGK. These data can also serve to explain why the number of baptised members decreased more than that of the confessing members, as more baptised members than confessing members left. Throughout most of their history, the CGK had more incoming than outgoing members. This changed in later years, however, as the years from 2012 onwards show a negative migration balance. Therefore, the growth of the CGK can be ascribed to both high birth rates and large numbers of incoming members. For later years, birth rates alone have a positive influence on growth, in contradiction to the Dutch population, whose growth is accounted for by immigration. Those non-Western immigrants coming to the Netherlands, however, rarely became members of a Reformed church, thus explaining why CGK growth differs from that of the general Dutch population.



Figure 7.9. Baptised and confessing members entering and leaving the CGK

The gap between incoming and outgoing members might be able to explain why the church has not grown in recent years, in spite of its birth surplus. As it currently stands, the birth surplus will remain in place for quite some years to come, although it has decreased and is not sufficiently high to cover the decline in total members.

The CGK border traffic can be further specified by denomination of origin and destination. This is usually a good indicator of the other churches with which the members of a church feel most affiliated.



Figure 7.10. Incoming CGK members by church of origin

This figure shows that the most common churches of origin for incoming CGK members were the GKN and the NHK. There was a large peak of people from the GKN in 2004, when the PKN was established. After 2004, the influx from the PKN continued. The statistics also show a fair number of people entering the CGK from the GG. Surprisingly few members came from small orthodox Reformed churches related to the CGK – i.e., the NGK and the GKv – even though the influx from the GKv grew after 2008, following a large peak in 2006, possible due to growing unrest within the GKv. The year 1977 saw a peak in people entering the CGK from other Reformed churches, but the yearbooks do not specify them. Further investigation revealed that an entire GKN congregation joined the CGK after disappointment with the theological developments in the GKN, allowing broader views on the authority of Scripture (Maranathakerk Urk, 2020).

For outgoing CGK members, the image is as follows:



Figure 7.11. Outgoing CGK members by church of destination

Again, there are clear ties with the GKN and NHK, and later the PKN and HHK. Fewer people went to the GG than came from there. Instead, there were more people who left the CGK for the GKv and NGK. The number of people going to the RKK was negligible, and the exodus to evangelical churches was growing.

## 7.5. The development of local churches

Final statistics to be presented in this part of the chapter concern the number of local churches and the average number of members in them.



Figure 7.12. The number of local churches in the CGK

The curve in figure 7.12 looks similar to that of the development in membership numbers. The number of local congregations grew from 40 in 1919 to 188 in 1997. This is a few more than the 185 churches in 1985, when membership numbers were at their peak. Local churches were therefore still being founded a few years after the church stopped growing as fast as it had before. In the final fifteen years of study, the number of local churches declined somewhat, but it seemed to pick up again by 2015. The merger and closure of churches in rural areas, as well as the splitting of churches in new suburbs, was mostly the result of demographical factors, however, and have little to do with the growth of the denomination as a whole.

The average number of members per local church shows a development similar to that of the number of members per local church:



Figure 7.13. The average number of members per local church in the CGK

Local CGK churches started out with roughly 200 members each, but grew to 425 by 1980. After that, the churches started to shrink a little, but still averaged around 400 members.

#### 7.6. Conclusions

The CGK are a denomination that is different from others in a variety of ways. Their place on Polderman's orthodox-experientialist spectrum is difficult to determine given their variety, from churches resembling the GG in most respects, with the use of the Dutch Authorised Version (*Statenvertaling*) and adherence to certain lifestyle choices, to other churches that are closer to the NGK, with a band leading worship and considerable liturgical liberties. This is a feature unique to the CGK. The way this denomination maintains these differences without allowing actual schisms sets it historically apart from all the other denominations in this dataset, which have all experienced one or more schisms.

As for the development of membership numbers, the CGK are unique in the sense that they initially experienced strong growth. Starting out with only few members who disagreed with developments in the leading church of the time, they showed an enormous increase from the members of just three congregations to over 76,000 members in 1985. After that peak, the church started to shrink somewhat, but not as rapidly or suddenly as the GKN, as detailed in the previous chapter. Unlike the GKN, the CGK have seen no dramatic decline in numbers to date. In fact, even though the CGK stopped growing, its membership remained stable for many years. Like the GKN and GG, the CGK started out with more baptised members than confessing members, but these numbers have

been inverted. In 2015, the distribution in the CGK (35/65) was similar to that of the GKv and the NGK. Like most other orthodox churches, with the exception of the GKN, the CGK still have a fairly large birth surplus. The CGK have more incoming than outgoing members, but the gap is becoming much smaller and the surplus is not enough to sustain continuing growth.
# 8. Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt

The GKv represent one of the larger denominations in the dataset. With a peak of more than 126,000 members and a pillar of its own in Dutch society, it no doubt is a denomination with an important place in contemporary Dutch church history. The GKv are considerably larger than the CGK, but a lot smaller than the GKN. Therefore, they can be grouped among the medium sized denominations in this dataset. As a denomination, the GKv have done much work to get where they are now, and have undergone many changes with varying consequences. In what follows, we will present the available data on membership numbers, demography, border traffic, and local churches.

### 8.1. Data description and analysis

First of all, a summary of the data is in order, as depicted below in table 8.1. As we saw in chapter 6, the GKv started out with around 80,000 members. By 1950, the first moment represented in the summary below, the GKv had a total of 93,063 members, reflecting at least some initial growth. The growth continued into the 1960s, then stopped, and resumed in the 1980s. This idiosyncrasy will be discussed later. The growth stopped for good after the early 2000s.

The GKv have never made up more than 1% of the total Dutch population, and hovered around 0.7% in 2015, the final year treated in this study. The number of GKv churches and the number of municipalities with GKv congregations have also varied through the years, starting high, but dropping sharply in the 1960s, before resuming growth, and then stabilising and declining. The average number of members per local church increased from 320 to 451, but in later years were on the decline.

Year	Membership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch pop- ulation	Local churches	Municipalities with GKvs	Local church size
1950	93,063		0.93	291	167	320
1960	98,215	0,49%	0.86	308	174	319
1970	86,494	-0,28%	0.67	274	161	316
1980	98,547	0,14%	0.7	261	157	378
1990	114,063	1,49%	0.77	264	161	432
2000	125,467	0,97%	0.78	270	159	461
2010	124,439	0,07%	0.75	277	158	449
2015	120,295	-0,64%	0.72	267	157	451

Table 8.1. Summary statistics of the GKv

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to a more detailed examination of these and other data.

# 8.2. Development of membership numbers

The first data of interest pertain to the GKv membership numbers throughout the years. The data are available from 1946 to the present, and show more clearly what has already been presented in the summary above.



Figure 8.1. The development of the membership in the GKv

The GKv started out with strong growth after their establishment, but this was also related to schism length; as we saw in chapter 6, it took several years for all members eventually to join the new GKv. The growth then came to a brief halt in 1950-1951, when several ministers and their followers rejoined the GKN after initially following the *Vrijmaking*. The data reflect a decrease of 2,410 members between 1950 and 1952. The denomination then took until 1956 to regain the numbers it had had before this group's return to the GKN. The GKv continued to grow until 1968, when their membership decreased from 107,766 to 94,992 in a single year, amounting to a difference of -12,774 members or nearly 12%. The GKv continued to lose members until 1972, dropping a total of 23,007 members (21%), in spite of regular birth, death, and traffic rates. These losses are not surprising, as 1967 marks the year of another schism, when the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK) were founded.



Figure 8.2. The development of the GKv compared to the development of the GKv and the NGK combined

Figure 8.2. shows how the GKv would have developed, had the members of the NGK stayed. This allows us to determine whether the gap that appeared in the GKv around 1967 can be compensated by the members of the NGK. As NGK collection started in 1970 and took a while to become consistent, a small gap remains unaccounted for in the years 1968-1970, but for the rest the line continues quite naturally after the schism.

The GKv took a long time to recover from that schism. In fact, it was not until 1987 that the GKv returned to the membership numbers of 1967. From 1987 onwards, the GKv continued to grow until they reached their absolute peak in 2003, with 128,227 members. The following year, however, the denomination lost 2,238 members and continued to decline in numbers. The 2003 decrease can partly be accounted for by the emergence of the DGK, a group of people who left the GKv to continue the *vrijgemaakte* tradition, but the DGK are generally assumed to have been smaller than the number of people who left the GKv that year. Thus, 2003 really seems to mark the year when the GKv stopped growing and definitely started to shrink. In 2009, another group separated from the GKv, which lost another 1.,06 members in 2010 and 2011. More information on this can be found in chapter 2.4.3. The GKv continued to shrink, losing around 1,000 members annually. In later years, this number only kept growing.

The pattern of development for the GKv, with their initial growth, their great losses in the late 1960s, renewed growth, and the latest decline, are also reflected in relation to the development of the Dutch population, as can be seen in figure 8.3.



Figure 8.3. The development of the Dutch population and GKv membership

This graph shows the development of the Dutch population and GKv membership on an index. All values have been divided by the number for the year 1950, so that the value for 1950 has been set as one, and the values for the following years show how much the group has grown or shrunk as compared to that first year. A value of two, then, means that the population has doubled in size, while a value of 0.5 means that it has halved.

The graph shows that the initial growth of the GKv was strong enough virtually to parallel the Dutch population between 1952 and 1968. After that, the growth resumed and was stronger than it was for the Dutch population. This trend ended in 2003. After that year, the Dutch population continued to increase, but GKv membership started to decline. This also shows when we look more closely at the growth itself, rather than the numbers of members:



Figure 8.4. The relative growth of the GKv and the Netherlands

The growth of the GKv was much more unstable than it was for the Netherlands, with large dips showing in 1950-1951, when a group returned to the GKN, and in 1967, when the NGK emerged. The small schism of 2003 is also visible, but less so for the 2009 schism. Overall, however, the growth of the GKv was indeed as strong as Dutch growth between 1955 and 1966, and even higher in the period 1974-1998, after which it decreased and dipped below the growth of the Netherlands.

### 8.3. Demographic statistics

The next aspect of the data to be examined are the demographic statistics and the ratio of confessing and baptised members in the GKv.



Figure 8.5. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the GKv

As figure 8.5. shows, the GKv persistently had fewer baptised members than confessing members until around 1970, with a ratio of around 48% to 52%, possibly due to the young age at which baptised GKv members did confession. After that year, the numbers start to diverge, with a decreasing share of baptised members and proportional increase of confessing members. This circumstance can be discussed in a different context by comparing the percentage of baptised members in the GKv to the percentage of under-twenty-year-olds in the Dutch population:



Figure 8.6. Baptised members in the GKv and under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

The Dutch under-twenty-year-old population decreased from 37% of the total population in 1950 to 23% in 2015, with a notable drop between 1965 and 1990. In that same period, the GKv baptised members went from 48% to 35%, representing a smaller and more gradual drop. Nevertheless, these numbers do show an overall decrease in young people in the GKv. The same emerges from the discrepancy between the number of baptisms and the number of confessions twenty years later:



Figure 8.7. Baptisms and confessions in the GKv with a twenty-year lag

The difference between the numbers for baptisms and confessions is the smallest we have encountered thus far, with an average of 26%. Even more surprising are the statistics for 1992-1993, when there were more confessions than baptisms twenty years earlier. This could either reflect the presence of many new members who had been baptised elsewhere who did public confession in the GKv in those years (which seems unlikely, given the information in figure 8.10), or else indicate that the numbers on baptisms are not entirely correct for the years immediately following the NGK schism.

This development within the GKv can be explained by the additional demographic data that are available through the yearbooks.

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths	Total incoming	Total outgoing
1975	2,153	1,496	503	811	666
1980	2,410	1,523	562	453	569
1990	2,404	1,861	640	383	683
2000*	2,175	1,946	758	458	1,088
2010	1,916	1,545	627	502	1,890
2015	1,604	1,370	681	721	2,147

Table 8.2. Summary of the demographic statistics of the GKv

This table shows the different demographic aspects of the GKv which influenced their growth. The number of births show a great increase since recordkeeping began, from 2,153 in 1975 to 2,404 in 1990, but that number has fallen since, dropping as low as 1,604 in 2015, which does not quite explain the decrease of under-twenty-year-olds shown in figures 8.5 and 8.6. The number of confessions follows the same pattern, rising until the 2000s and dropping thereafter. The number of deaths, however, remained very constant after an initial increase. This means that from the 2000s onwards, as the number of births and confessions declined, the number of deaths became relatively higher. This led to a decrease in birth surplus, also contributing to the declining membership of the church as a whole.



Figure 8.8. The demographic statistics of the GKv

This information can be examined in further detail comparing it to the same information for the general Dutch population:



Figure 8.9. Births and deaths in the Netherlands and the GKv

This figure shows that the number of births in the GKv was at first much higher than in the Dutch population. GKv data collection started in 1972, but the first four years present a skewed image of the situation, so close after the NGK schism. For that reason, the starting point for this graph has been set at 1975. Regardless, data collection began after the sudden decline in birth rates in the Dutch population. However, the last time the birth rate in the Netherlands was as high as it was in the GKv in 1976-1984 was 1947, when it was unnaturally high due to the baby boom after World War II. From around 1985 onwards, however, the birth rate in the GKv gradually started to decline and continued to do so until 2015. The death rate in the GKv, however, was always lower than it was in the Netherlands and stayed at a stable level. The very gradual decline in the GKv birth rate does not seem to correlate with the start of the decline in GKv membership, although it may of course have played a role. Perhaps the border traffic can shed more light on the destination of outgoing GKv members after 2003.

#### 8.4. Border traffic in the GKv

Another factor to take into account is the influence of incoming and outgoing GKv members. The number of people leaving the denomination has always been higher than the number of those who join, with a ratio of roughly 2:1, and, from 2010 onwards, 3:1. This ratio is much larger than it is for most other denominations. Interestingly, in all these years, there were more confessing members

than baptised members who left. Incoming members are also more often confessing members than baptised members. Border traffic, then, does not help explain the great drop in baptised members noted before, which may instead be due to decrease in family size as well as the age at which people start having children.



Figure 8.10. Baptised and confessing members entering and leaving the GKv

Aside from data on members who join and leave the GKv, there are also data available on the origin and destination of the interdenominational traffic.



Figure 8.11. Incoming GKv members by church of origin

Figure 8.11 shows that the origin of people joining the GKv has changed somewhat. Until 1990, many came from the GKN. From 2004 onwards, this trend continued in members coming from the PKN. Far fewer people came from the NHK, suggesting that the traffic from the PKN probably came mostly from the GKN side of the PKN denomination. An increasing number of people came from the CGK, but NGK members seem to have been less interested in going to the GKv.

The destinations of people leaving the GKv show a different distribution:



Figure 8.12. Outgoing GKv members by church of destination

The first thing that stands out in this graph is the increase in people leaving the GKv, as we also saw in figure 8.10. There were always people leaving for the NGK and CGK, a number that started to increase after around 2003, and a number also went to the PKN. The largest groups of people, however, did not go to another denomination, or failed to indicate their destination, or else left to denominations unspecified in the GKv records. One category curiously absent from the list in the GKv records are the evangelical churches. Nevertheless, they quite likely make up the bulk of the miscellaneous denominations to which a growing number of outgoing GKv members starting leaving from the 2000s onwards.

### 8.5. The development of local churches

The data also supply information on the number of local congregations in the GKv. This number showed a sharp increase between 1945 and 1961, due both to the recent institution of the GKv and the need for new congregations and to the approach the GKv took. Like the GKN, the GKv were of the opinion that each municipality should have a GKv, no matter how small such a congregation might be. In addition, the GKv also usually split congregations that grew too large into multiple smaller ones. This, in combination with increased mobility in the Dutch population starting in the 1960s, can explain the sharp increase in the number of local congregations. The number dropped sharply with the secession of 1967,

and it took some time for all departing congregations to leave. The lowest number of churches in the schism period was not reached until 1976, nine years after the original schism had taken place. After that, the number of local congregations stayed fairly stable, hovering around 260, although there was a small increase between 2005 and 2010, after which there was another drop. A concise overview of the number of local churches and ministers up to 1984 can be found in Karssenberg (1984), who lists these statistics, together with the names of the ministers and the churches they served.



Figure 8.13. The number of local churches in the GKv

The number of members per local church increased greatly through the years, although here too a drop can be observed after 2003. This means that even as the denomination grew, the number of local churches did not increase proportionally. Average congregation size grew from 310 in 1950 to 470 in 2003, and was at around 450 by 2015. This means much larger churches, and many more members for each minister to serve.



Figure 8.14. The average number of members per local church in the GKv

#### 8.6. Conclusions

Statistically, the GKy represent one of the larger denominations in the dataset, although nowhere nearly as large as the GKN. In 2015, they were slightly larger than the GG, but they were already a lot smaller than they had been in 2003. The development of the GKv was very similar to that of the GKN, as Dekker (2013) has already argued. Both denominations showed the same initial growth, membership peak, followed by a marked decline. The GKy have always had more confessing members than baptised members, with a ratio of 65% confessing members to 35% baptised members in 2015, much like the NGK, a denomination that largely shares their history and theology. By 2015, the GK also still had a birth surplus, although it was on the decline, as was the number of confessions, much like in the CGK and NGK, albeit not as drastically as in the GKN. An increasing number of people left the GKy, a lot more than were coming in from other denominations. Some 60% of the outgoing members were confessing members, the remaining 40% were baptised members. The number of births, confessions, and incoming members from other denominations decreased over the years, while the number of deaths and leaving members was on the rise. This further serves to illustrate the declining numbers that become apparent from 2003 onwards. There was some border traffic between the GKv and the CGK and NGK, as well as the PKN churches, but the largest number of members left for evangelical churches, or failed to indicate where they were going, or left the church altogether.

# 9. Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

The NGK constitute one of the smaller denominations in the dataset with around 30,000 members. These churches emerged from the GKv in 1967, and became an independent denomination. This chapter will first present the data for the total membership number and the details of those statistics, followed by an examination of demographic developments and border traffic.

## 9.1. Data description and analysis

The NGK remained consistently small throughout the period examined, but their membership was also always on the rise. They started out with around 20,000 members, but grew steadily to 33,000. The growth remained stable and continued through the years, but in the final three years of the dataset, between 2012 and 2015, the growth became weaker. In fact, it seems that the NGK had their peak in 2012 with 33,366 members. Even though the strong initial growth abated, the NGK did not lose their stable share of the Dutch population, continually hovering around 0.2%. The number of NGK churches and the number of municipalities with NGK churches follow the pattern of strong initial growth, followed by a peak and stabilisation. The NGK had 96 churches in 1988 and 1989, but were at 87 in 2015. As for the number of municipalities with NGKs, the peak was 87, but was 76 in 2015. The average number of members per local church, however, continued to increase. As the number of churches declined while total membership grew, congregation size increased.

Year	Mem- bership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch pop- ulation	Local churches	Municipalities with NGKs	Local church size
1970	23,478		0.18%	78	66	301
1980	29,330	2.3%	0.21%	93	85	315
1990	29,619	0.16%	0.2%	95	86	312
2000	30,393	0.13%	0.19%	93	82	327
2010	32,777	0.84%	0.2%	91	80	360
2015	32,926	0.05%	0.19%	87	76	378

Table 9.1. Summary statistics of the NGK

## 9.2. Development of membership numbers

The data presented in table 9.1 above can be studied in more detail, which is what this part of the chapter will do. First, the development of the membership numbers will be shown graphically.



Figure 9.1. The development of the membership in the NGK

This figure clearly shows the strong initial growth of the NGK, rising from 23,000 in 1970 to 28,000 in 1974. The growth before 1970 can only be guessed at, since there are no NGK yearbooks for the years 1967-1969. In chapter 8, however, we found that the GKv lost 23,007 members between 1968 and 1972, which seems to coincide nicely with the data presented in figure 9.1. This figure also shows that the schism of 1967 was a much more gradual process than the *Vrijmaking*, for instance, when all GKv churches and members changed denomination within the space of a few years. While the GKv had a group of members who returned to their mother church (the GKN), this never happened in the NGK. The schism seems to have taken until 1974 before the NGK attained stable membership numbers and no more complete congregations joined the denomination. This also shows that the NGK's initial growth was mostly due to the new formation of the denomination, rather than a matter of actual growth.

The development of the NGK can also be indexed in comparison with the Dutch population, where the value of both the NGK and the Netherlands in 1974 has been set as 1, and all other years are presented as a factor of that:



Figure 9.2. The development of the Dutch population and NGK membership

The graph indicates that the growth of the NGK was indeed rather small between 1974 and 1998, as the value stayed very close to 1, whereas the Dutch population multiplied by a factor of 1.16. After 1998, however, the NGK picked up the pace and started to grow until they had grown by a factor of 1.16 in 2012, although that number dropped to 1.14 in 2015. Apart from overall development, also the relative annual growth of the NGK and the Dutch population can be compared:



Figure 9.3. The relative growth of the NGK and the Netherlands

This representation shows a long period of stable growth in the NGK between 0 and 1% until 1998, with some spikes and dips, most notably a peak of +2.1% in 2004 and a dip of -0.6% in 2005. The years 2013-2015 started showing a decrease. However, as noted in the summary statistics in table 9.1 above, the NGK did retain their share of the Dutch population, meaning that they must have retained roughly the same growth rate. Figure 9.2 above shows that this was indeed the case. The trendlines confirm this image: the growth of the NGK, although very unstable, was actually higher than the growth in the Dutch population in the early 2000s, and similar by 2015. However, it should also be kept in mind that smaller numbers also yield larger visible fluctuations.

# 9.3. Demographic statistics

There are also other data to be presented on demographic development as compared to the Dutch population: births, deaths, and the age of NGK members. The first statistic of note is the proportion of confessing members to baptised members:



Figure 9.4. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the NGK

The NGK started with 50% confessing members and 46% baptised members. This leaves 4% unaccounted for, which may represent guest members who are actually registered in another local congregation but attend services in another congregation often enough to be granted their own status as guests. The proportion of baptised to confessing members remained balanced throughout the early years, meaning that half of the people in the church had not yet made public confession of their faith, which usually happens between the ages of eighteen and twenty. After the first few years, however, the numbers started to fluctuate. The number of baptised members fell to 36% in 1990 and continued to stay there until 2015, with a slight U-shaped development, with 35% in 1995 and 37% in 2015. The confessing members stayed at 63%, where the remaining percent probably are probably represented by guest members.



Figure 9.5. Baptised members in the NGK and under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

The U-shape curve in baptised members noted above is atypical when compared to the trend of the Dutch population, where the number of under-twentyyear-olds only decreased, while the NGK showed a small increase in the last ten years or so. In addition, we can look at the difference between baptisms and confessions made twenty years later:



Figure 9.6. Baptisms and confessions in the NGK with a twenty-year lag

Like the other denominations we have looked at, the NGK show a growing gap between the two numbers. There were always more baptisms than confessions twenty years later. On average, the difference was 30%.

The demographic data presented in table 9.2 may well explain these phenomena in greater detail.

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths	Total incoming	Total outgoing
1985	520	426	190	380	598
1990	465	449	205	412	681
2000	434	333	204	583	658
2010	429	310	205	723	739
2015	392	272	121	785	856

Table 9.2. Summary of the demographic statistics of the NGK

As this table shows, the NGK did not have very high absolute birth, confession, and death numbers. This also clearly showed in 2015, when the numbers for each category were rather lower than preceding years, reflecting the small drop in membership that occurred in the years after 2012.



Figure 9.7. The demographic statistics of the NGK

Throughout the period examined, the number of deaths was considerably lower than the number of births. This means that the NGK had a birth surplus, which might explain the still relatively high number of young people in the NGK. In regard to the number of confessions, it is interesting that their number – with a twenty-year delay – is rather lower than the number of births, meaning that a significant share of children baptised in the NGK did not make public confession of their faith there. The number of confessions is generally around 50-60% lower than the number of baptisms twenty years earlier. The information on the NGK demographic development may also be compared to that of the Dutch population:



Figure 9.8. Births and deaths in the Netherlands and the NGK

Although NGK demographic development does not show a very smooth line, it can be compared to the development in the Netherlands. Birth rate in the NGK was very similar to that of the Netherlands. The death rates in the NGK were lower than they were in the Netherlands. This would suggest that, given the same number of births combined with the fewer number of deaths, the NGK was growing at a slightly higher rate than the Dutch population. Figure 9.2 shows that this was indeed the case, at least until 2012, when the growth in the NGK fell below zero. Unfortunately, the data do not show what happened between 2012 and 2015 to explain this lack of growth. The demographic factors did not change, indicating that there must have been other reasons for this. One possible factor, border traffic, will be examined below.

### 9.4. Border traffic in the NGK

One explanatory factor for the growth of a church is the traffic with other denominations, and the number of people who leave or join the denomination, or who convert and come to the church, perhaps for the first time. The following graph shows incoming and outgoing NGK members:



Figure 9.9. Baptised and confessing members entering and leaving the NGK

The NGK started out with more outgoing than incoming members, although the difference seems to have decreased over the years. Incoming and outgoing confessing members outnumbered incoming and outgoing baptised members, but their ratio largely matches the actual ratio of baptised and confessing members in the NGK.

Apart from these statistics, the NGK also kept tabs on the origin and destination of new and exiting members:



Figure 9.10. Incoming NGK members by church of origin

During the early years when the NGK was collecting data on border traffic, the numbers for people coming from the GKN, NHK, and CGK were evenly divided. After that, however, the number of people from the PKN increased. For the years 1994-2003, the NGK statistics also include SoW as a denomination. SoW stands for *Samen op Weg* and was the precursor to the PKN. As the PKN includes the GKN, NHK, and Lutheran church, it is impossible to determine which of these were actually involved when the abbreviation SoW was used. The number of incoming members from the GKv steadily increased throughout the NGK's history. It may be that many in the GKv harboured a wish for changes, which nevertheless happened slowly there. Since these changes were already being implemented in the NGK, these churches may have represented a fitting destination for disgruntled GKv members.



Figure 9.11. NGK members by church of destination

People leaving the NGK largely went to the PKN and its component denominations, the GKN and the NHK. Aside from them, the CGK proved another feasible option. The GKv, on the other hand, can hardly be called a denomination of interest. From the 2000s onwards, the evangelical churches became increasingly popular. The variety in the destinations of outgoing NGK members is larger than it is for most other denominations discussed so far. A smaller denomination with a broader spectrum of views therefore seems to be more open to traffic than other types of denominations are. This circumstance did not have a negative effect on the growth of the denomination as a whole, however, as the NGK migration balance was mostly positive throughout the years, also showing their attractiveness to members from other denominations.

## 9.5. The development of local churches

A final statistic of note concerns the number of local churches in the NGK and average congregation size. The number of churches dropped over the years, meaning that quite a lot of churches closed, mostly due to merger. In fact, the number of churches in the NGK fluctuated rather heavily, from a peak of 96 1990 and 1992 to a dip of 87 in 2014. There were few consecutive years with the same number of churches. In more recent years, however, the total number of churches showed a decline.



Figure 9.12. The number of local churches in the NGK

In line with a growing membership spread over a declining number of churches, average congregation size grew:



Figure 9.13. The average number of members per local church in the NGK

The average congregation size in the NGK rose, starting at around 310 in 1975 and reaching 380 in 2015. However, if, as indicated by earlier data, the NGK

stopped growing, average congregation size will stabilise and perhaps even decrease again.

#### 9.6. Conclusions

The NGK make up one of the most recently founded denominations in the dataset and one of the more progressive ones in terms of views on the world, located more to the left-hand side of Polderman's (1996, p. 251) model, between the GKN and GKv. The NGK also represent one of the smaller denominations in the dataset. They are about half the size of the CGK, and a little larger than the GGN. The denomination kept growing until 2012, but has not grown since.

The proportion of confessing to baptised members in the NGK (63/37) started out similar to that of the GKv, although by 2015 the difference in proportion in the NGK had grown smaller than it was in the GKv that year, indicating that, while the gap in the GKv continued to widen, it was actually shrinking in the NGK. No other denominations show this movement so late in their development. The death rate in the NGK increased ever so slightly and the birth rates declined a little more, indicating that in the future the denomination may have to deal with a growing older population. In this sense, the NGK are no different from the GKv and CGK. The NGK had a smaller influx of incoming members than the CGK, but more than the GKv. The NGK also had a smaller number of outgoing members than the GKv, but comparatively more than the CGK. Most border traffic occurred with the PKN and its component denominations, as well as with the CGK, equally in both directions. GKv members did join the NGK, but traffic between these denominations was unidirectional. NGK members left to join evangelical churches, but very few members from those churches came to the NGK.

In conclusion, the image of the NGK is one of a small but stable church. The denomination's numbers grew slowly but steadily over the years, with its growth almost paralleling the growth of the Dutch population. Its share of the Dutch population also remained constant throughout the years. The only change occurring between 1970 and 2015 is that the number of churches shrank, and, as a result, average congregation size grew.

# 10. Gereformeerde Gemeenten

The GG make up the first exclusively experientialist denomination in the Kampen dataset. Although the CGK also show some strong experientialist characteristics, they are much more divided in their inclination towards either orthodoxy or experientialism. The GG have existed since 1907, but regrettably did not begin collecting data on membership until 1948, leaving us with no information for the early years. The reason for this absence is the widespread conviction within the denomination that the collection of statistics is not very important. An excessive focus on statistics, so the argument went, would divert attention from spiritual growth to numerical growth. This chapter will begin with a discussion of the statistics in the dataset. The first section will describe membership numbers, followed by sections on demographic characteristics, border traffic, and data on local churches.

## 10.1. Data description and analysis

Year	Mem- bership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch pop- ulation	Local churches	Municipalities with GGs	Local church size
1950	61,900		0.62%	137	90	452
1960	62,159	-0.07%	0.55%	139	93	447
1970	75,552	1.79%	0.58%	153	102	494
1980	82,747	1.14%	0.59%	158	104	524
1990	90,648	0.83%	0.61%	162	110	560
2000	98,451	0.86%	0.62%	159	108	619
2010	10,4418	0.61%	0.63%	159	108	657
2015	10,6897	0.5%	0.63%	154	107	699

All descriptive statistics for the GG can be summarised as follows:

Table 10.1. Summary statistics of the GG

This table shows continuing growth in the GG, from 62,000 in 1950 to almost 107,000 in 2015. That represents a total increase of 58%, which is relatively large. The annual growth rate remained steady, hovering between one and two percent until the 1990s. More recently, that rate came to rest at half a percent. As such, although the church was still growing by 2015, growth has nearly halved since the 2000s. This trend seems to continue until the GG begin to

shrink, but this is something that will have to be borne out by further data collection in future years.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the declining growth, the GG have still kept up with the growth of the Dutch population. A relevant question is whether there is just a correlation between the two, or whether there is some causal connection. If there is a causal relationship, the GG would have experienced growth due to the growth of the Dutch general population. Chapter 26 will go further into this question, but for now it can be noted that the growth in the Netherlands seems to have been largely due to immigration, while the GG grew because of a high birth surplus.

The number of GG churches and municipalities with GG churches was fairly stable, although the final year in the dataset reflected a slight decrease. It is not clear whether this change is structural or incidental. More interesting is the statistic on average congregation size, which grew from 450 in 1950 to almost 700 in 2015. This means that local congregations were growing in size. This is unsurprising, given the other statistics: total membership increased significantly, while the number of local churches stayed more or less the same. One might ask why the number of churches was not expanded to accommodate the growing membership. This can probably be explained in part by the lack of trained ministers, as the admission process for students seeking to enter the ministry has always been very strict, meaning that new ministers are difficult to come by. In addition, members used to feel that the use of cars or bicycles to attend Sunday worship services was not appropriate. This objection largely disappeared in later years, so that small congregations were more easily closed and members went to join a neighbouring congregation. For the same reason, there is less urgency to open new churches in other places, even if a hundred or more church members have to travel relatively far for Sunday worship. On top of this, planting new churches also means buying or constructing new buildings, which is a decision that cannot be taken lightly and is not something that is done by any sort of central government because of the more congregational nature of GG polity.

## 10.2. Development of membership numbers

The first statistic presented above, the development in total membership, can be considered in greater detail. The relevant numbers are presented here in figure 10.1:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In fact, the 2019 GG yearbook was the first to report a smaller number of members than the preceding year, due to a local secession. In that year, there was a decrease of 122. In 2020, the denomination grew by 81 members, but the period of large growth seems to have ended.



Figure 10.1. The development of the number of members in the GG

As noted before, the GG showed very strong growth, which continued until 2015. The development was very steady and seems to have passed at roughly the same level, although closer examination reveals that it slowed in later years, roughly from 2005 onwards. Figure 10.1 also reflects a sharp decline in 1954, when the GG lost almost 8,000 members. The cause for this dip was a schism which took place the year before, when a number of members left to form the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland* (GGN). The following year, the GG gained some members, but lost a slightly larger number again the following year, showing the numerical impact the schism had. This development can be compared to the way the GG might have developed, had the GGN schism not occurred:



Figure 10.2. The development of the GG compared to the development of the GG and the GGN combined

This figure charts the development of GG membership numbers, together with the development of GG and GGN numbers combined. The resulting pattern shows a rather natural development from the line that was set between 1948 and 1954, indicating that the schism was the main factor for the dip showing in 1954. A similar event occurred in 1981-1982, as reflected in the small dip in the line combining the GG and the GGN, which shows the schism that took place when the *Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland (buiten verband)* left the GGN. Unfortunately, the GGN (bv) never started data collection and no information is available to allow for comparison. However, the GGN (bv) are small, and most of local churches went on to close or to return to the GGN (*Nederlands Dagblad*, 2 April 2015). The breach of 1980 therefore seems to have healed with time (see chapter 2 for more information on this schism).

In order to determine how representative the development of GG membership on its own is, the following graph has been made, mapping that development along with that of the general Dutch population, going back to 1948 as the first year.



Figure 10.3. The development of the Dutch population and GG membership

This graph shows that the GG experienced strong growth since 1955. The value of the year 1955 has been chosen as the starting index, shortly after the GGN schism and the renewed normalisation of the GG. From 1955 onwards, the growth of the Dutch population tailed off somewhat in comparison to that of the GG. This shows that even though GG growth decreased as well, it was still stronger than it was for the Netherlands. Interestingly, whereas the growth of the Netherlands was due mostly to immigration (CBS, 2019a), GG growth was the result of high birth rates (Ter Horst, 2017), although, as this latter source also notes, the birth surplus was already decreasing at that time. At any rate, the growth of the GG may not have been directly related to the growth of the Dutch population, as the source of GG growth is very different and mostly internal (Janse, 1985, p. 217).

The very stable growth of the GG can also be charted as follows:



Figure 10.4. The relative growth of the GG and the Netherlands

This figure shows the growth of the GG by relative annual increase. The years of the schism with the GGN have been removed for the sake of presentation, showing that the GG clearly stabilised. From around 1975 onwards, the annual growth stayed between 0.5 and 1.5%, although a very slight downward trend can be observed. This downturn is very gradual and appears to reflect a natural decrease, but there may come a time when decreasing growth becomes increasing decline, as we saw for the denominations discussed in previous chapters. Growth in the GG did decline and in later years approached zero, but was on average still higher than the growth of the Netherlands, which explains how the GG share of the Dutch population could stay so stable and even increase a little. The growth in the Netherlands, however, remained low but above zero, not showing any signs of turning into decline.

## 10.3. Demographic statistics

The next set of statistics available for the GG relates to the details of their composition. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of statistics available here, but what is available will be discussed. First of all, the GG yearbooks make a distinction between baptised members and confessing members. Interesting here is that the GG started out with more baptised members than confessing members (see figure 10.5):



Figure 10.5. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the GG

This proportion changed in 1955, when the share of baptised members fell below 50% and the percentage of confessing members rose higher. This development continued until 2015. Assuming that people make public confession of their faith around the age of twenty, the percentage of baptised members in the GG can be compared to the percentage of under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands. It needs to be kept in mind, however, that GG members tend to wait longer to make confession than they do in the denominations discussed in previous chapters, and that the general rule of twenty as the age of confession must be treated with greater caution here. As a general guideline, however, it can still be used.



Figure 10.6. Baptised members in the GG and under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

The picture sketched by this figure is that of significantly different developments in the GG and the Dutch population. The share of people under the age of twenty in the Netherlands dropped steeply from almost 40% in the 1960s to under 25% in the 1980s due to declining birth rates in the wake of the sexual revolution. For the GG, however, the drop in percentage was much less significant, decreasing from 52% to 42%. The decline was also much more gradual in nature, indicating that, even if the advent of contraception did have some influence within the GG, it did not have a very obvious effect, as the adoption of contraceptive methods passed slowly over time.

There are several possible explanations to the decrease in baptised members in the GG. First of all, it could be an indication that the GG were ageing, which ought to find reflection in declining birth rates. There is, however, no evidence for such a hypothesis, as GG birth rates are only available after 2005 and for the available period only show a slight decrease. Janse (1985) states that birth rates in the GG and GGN were higher than in other churches (p. 202), but were slowly declining. Janse does see a relationship between this decline and the use of contraception, but states that the influence was minimal (p. 247). Secondly, there may also have been adult baptised members who never made public confession.

Another possible explanation for the decline in baptised members is that some may have been leaving the church before doing confession. This hypothesis can be explored in more detail, as there is information available on the numbers of incoming and outgoing members, as presented below.
Year	Births	Deaths	Total incoming	Total outgoing
1970			680	478
1980			515	1,178
1990			536	1,396
2000			861	1,479
2010	2,164	612	909	1,499
2015	2,145	586	839	1,477

Table 10.2. Summary of the demographic statistics of the GG

As this table shows, the total number of incoming members increased until 2010, but seems to have decreased between 2010 and 2015. The same goes for the number of outgoing members, which is slightly lower for 2015 than it is for 2010, although this does not seem to be a matter of structural decrease. Most importantly for the GG, there were many more outgoing than incoming members. Nevertheless, the membership was still growing in 2015, suggesting a very high rate of birth. This hypothesis cannot, however, be tested for earlier years, as the GG did not start publishing the relevant demographic statistics until 2005. The statistics that are available are presented below:



Figure 10.7. Birth and death rates in the GG and the Netherlands

Figure 10.7 shows that the birth rate was indeed significantly higher than the death rate, by a factor of three or four, reflecting a high birth surplus. The development was very stable. The annual number of births persistently hovered

around 2,150, and the annual deaths remained stable around 600. Clearly, these numbers more than made up for the negative balance of incoming and outgoing members. In comparison to the Netherlands, the GG had a much higher birth rate, which was twice as high, in fact, and a lower death rate, again showing the size of the GG birth surplus.

# 10.4. Border traffic in the GG

There is also more to be said about the numbers of incoming and outgoing members. This information is presented in figure 10.9:



Figure 10.8. Baptised and confessing members entering and leaving the GG

The figure above clearly shows that the number of people leaving the church was higher than that of those joining, and that this gap also grew, recalling the pattern of the GKv. The gap was compensated by the birth rate as presented in figure 10.7, which led to growth. The higher number of outgoing baptised members than incoming baptised members was sufficient to account for the slight decrease in the proportion of baptised members in the GG (see figure 10.6), but it was not high enough to cause an overall decrease in GG membership.

The numbers for incoming and outgoing GG members can once again be studied in more detail, as the yearbooks provide information on their destination and origin:



Figure 10.9. Incoming GG members by church of origin

This graph shows that, prior to 2004, the most common church of origin for incoming GG members was the NHK. After the PKN was founded, most members came from the PKN and the HHK, showing that the GG and the *Hervormde* church – or at least, the *Gereformeerde* branch represented in the GB and HHK – seem to have felt related. The third and fourth most common churches of origin were the GGN and the OGG, which are both experientialist denominations, but stricter than the GG. The numbers of incoming members from more conservative churches increased through the years, indicating that there may have been a movement from the right wing of Polderman's spectrum to the left. More light may be shed on these trends by an examination of the destination churches of outgoing GG members:



Figure 10.10. Outgoing GG members by church of destination

Figure 10.10 shows the NHK, PKN, and HHK to be even more common destinations for outgoing GG members, confirming the connection GG members felt with the *Hervormde* church. Other denominations are all but absent in this figure, although the most common remaining destination was the CGK, which, as described in chapter 7, also have experientialist characteristics and even entertained contacts with the GG in their early years. This graph confirms the suggestion that people were coming to the GG from stricter denominations, and leaving them for more lenient ones. Apparently, they felt a need for a lighter, less strict way of Christian living.

### 10.5. The development of local churches

A final set of statistics pertains to the number of churches in the GG and average congregation size. The number of local churches, as we saw in the introduction, was long stable:



Figure 10.11. The number of local churches in the GG

Having experienced strong growth between 1948 and 1978, the number of churches stayed around 160 thereafter, but seemed to have trending towards 150 in the final years under examination. In 1954, the number dropped from 145 to 130, reflecting the departure of around fifteen GG churches to form the GGN. As the GGN started with no less than 33 churches in 1954, they also seem to have founded a number of new churches when they started.

At any rate, the drop in the number of churches in the final few years under investigation is interesting, since the church membership itself did not shrink, but local churches seem to have disappeared, probably merging with other GG churches nearby. This trend also had an impact on the average congregation size:



Figure 10.12. The average number of members per local church in the GG

Clearly, average congregation size grew strongly, from 450 in 1950 to almost 700 in 2015. This is interesting, because the GG were apparently not instituting new churches to accommodate their increasing membership. This has to do with the changing views Sunday travel, which had been frowned upon in earlier years, but later on became perfectly acceptable.

Another factor in the increasing congregation size and the lack of new churches relates to the recruitment of ministers, which was very difficult in the GG. According to Janse (1985), 80 to 90% of candidates who applied to the Theological School were turned down, since the requirements and conditions were very demanding (p. 149). This led to a structural lack of ministers. In 1985, there were a total of 49 ministers in the entire GG denomination, and in 2020 there were 61. A lack of ministers made it much harder to establish new churches.

#### 10.6. Conclusions

The GG make up one of the larger denominations in the dataset, with around 107,000 members. That makes them slightly smaller than the GKv, and roughly the size of the HHK, GGN, and NGK combined. As for the development of membership numbers, the GG show a pattern that is different from that for the other denominations discussed before. Whereas by 2003 and 2015 the GKN and GKv had long passed their peak and were shrinking, the GG numbers still showed an upwards line. However, many members were leaving the GG, most of them bap-

tised members. This pattern in incoming and outgoing members closely resembles that of the GKv, but while this resulted in a decrease in membership numbers in the GKv, the GG maintained growth by virtue of a high birth surplus. A high birth surplus is typical for experientialist churches, but unfortunately, no birth rate statistics are available for the other experientialist churches, making comparison impossible. Like the GKN and the CGK, the GG started out with a higher proportion of baptised members than confessing members, but this proportion was later inverted and currently stands at 45/55, meaning that by 2015 or 2003 the GG had relatively more baptised members than either the CGK (35/65) or the GKN (40/60).

GG border traffic in both directions occurred mostly with the *Hervormde* church, with which its membership apparently felt closest ties. This applies in particular to NHK churches with a GB character, as the GG did not have any affinity with the pluralist and liberal views of the NHK as a whole. People also left to the CGK, while most incoming members came from the GGN and OGG. This traffic is interesting in locating the GG in relation to other churches in terms of leniency; people tended to come from stricter denominations and to leave for more lenient ones. Although the denomination as a whole grew throughout its history, the number of local churches did not grow, due to a variety of factors, including the segregation of the GG from the Dutch population and minister shortage.

# 11. Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland

Like the GG, the GGN are an experientialist denomination. They are the smallest denomination in the Kampen dataset, with 24,000 members in 2015. They do, however, represent an important piece of the history of experientialist churches in the Netherlands and have a large sphere of influence in some places. This chapter will describe the temporal development of the GGN, and examine demographic information, border traffic, and the number and size of local churches.

#### 11.1. Data description and analysis

Year	Mem- bership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch pop- ulation	Local churches	Municipalities with GGNs	Local church size
1960	12,854		0.11%	47	40	273
1970	15,923	1.89%	0.12%	51	41	312
1980	19,101	1.63%	0.14%	57	47	335
1990	18,277	-0.42%	0.12%	54	48	338
2000	20,644	1.34%	0.13%	53	47	390
2010	23,182	0.97%	0.14%	49	42	473
2015	24,182	1.14%	0.14%	49	42	504

The descriptive information on the denomination can be summarised as follows:

Table 11.1. Summary statistics of the GGN

This table shows that the GGN experienced significant growth, from almost 13,000 members in 1960 to 24,000 in 2015. This represents an impressive total growth of 88%, which is also reflected in the average relative growth per year in each decade. The GGN grew by almost 2% each year until 2000, after which growth began hovering around 1%. The only exception is the decade of the 1980s, when a number of members left the GGN to found the GGN (bv). The GGN's share of the Dutch population stayed constant, and even increased a little from 0.1% to 0.14%. This would suggest that the GGN grew faster than the Dutch population; this assumption will be discussed later on. The number of local churches and municipalities with GGNs remained largely the same, but as the denomination's membership grew considerably, average congregation size increased, from around 275 to over 500 members.

### 11.2. Development of membership numbers

Figure 11.1 shows the development of the GGN's membership numbers. In 1954, total membership was at 8,817. However, the pattern we have consistently seen is that it always takes a few years for data collection to become complete and for a new church to establish total membership. Thus, by 1960 the GGN had close to 13,000 members. The denomination continued to grow to 24,000 members in 2015, and there are no signs that it has stopped growing since.



Figure 11.1. The development of the number of members in the GGN

The growth of the GGN was interrupted in 1980, when their membership declined from 19,000 members to a little over 16,000, amounting to a loss of almost 16%. The GGN (bv), which emerged that year, are usually assumed to have had 3,000 members at their establishment, which therefore seems to be corroborated by the GGN membership numbers. The schism was a dramatic event, as three of the six GGN ministers left the denomination. It took until 1992 for the GGN to return to their pre-schism membership of 19,000. They then continued at their normal pace of growth. In 2008-2009, the GGN saw a membership boost when numbers increased from around 22,000 to 24,000 members, as birth, death, and traffic numbers remained regular, but a number of members from the GGN (bv) also returned to the GGN. Some of those who did not rejoin the GGN were members of the local GGN (bv) churches in Veenendaal, Dinteloord, and Rijssen, which still exist. Those three congregations had several hundred members. The total number of members who remained in the GGN (bv) combined with the number of those who returned to the GGN in 2008 is lower than the original number that left in 1981. The people who remain unaccounted for may therefore have gone to the GG, OGG, or other, similar denominations, and/or the GGN (bv) denomination itself may have lost members between 1981 and 2008.

The growth in the GGN continued strong until 2015. As we saw before in table 11.1, their share of the Dutch population grew over the years, suggestive of a growth rate that was higher than that of the Dutch population. This suggestion proves to be correct:



Figure 11.2. The development of the GGN and the Netherlands

Figure 11.2 compares the development of GGN membership and the Dutch population. This development has been placed on an index, with the 1957 value set as 1, when the initial growth had stabilised somewhat, and all subsequent values have been divided by this initial value. The graph shows that the Dutch population grew by a factor of 1.5 between 1957 and 2015, while the growth of the GGN approached 2, meaning that they doubled in size. This also suggests that the GGN grew independently of the Dutch population and at their own rate. It would appear that such growth is probably accounted for by higher birth rates in stricter denominations, rather than growth from the outside by the recruitment of new members (Janse, 1985, p. 217). Unfortunately, no statistics on birth rate or border traffic are available for the GGN, such that we are only left guessing. It is, however, an educated guess, since it seems safe to assume that the pattern of the GGN is similar to that of the GG, from which they came.

As has already been made clear, the growth of the GGN was very steady and remained that way. This can also be seen when the relative annual growth is mapped as in figure 11.4:



Figure 11.4. The relative growth of the GGN and the Netherlands

The initial growth shows a large peak, but this is probably due to the pattern for new denominations, when an increasing number of members join and data collection is still shaky. After that, the growth stayed at around 1%, but very gradually crept towards zero. In 2014, there was a decrease of 0.1%, followed by an increase of 0.6%. These numbers seem to suggest that the GGN were no longer growing and were in fact starting to decline in membership, as was also the case for the GG by 2015. Future data collection will have to show how this number develops. Despite this downward trend, GGN growth seemed on average to be higher than that of the Dutch population. This explains why their share of the Dutch population could remain constant and even increase a little.

### 11.3. Demographic statistics

Unfortunately, there is no information on the number of baptisms, deaths, and confessions available for the GGN. Any information that could be reconstructed, however, will be discussed. The first available statistics pertain to the proportion of baptised members to confessing members, as presented in figure 11.5:



Figure 11.5. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the GGN

This figure shows an interesting development. The GGN started out with an equal proportion of members, split almost 50/50. After that, however, the proportion of baptised members started to increase. The GGN are unique among the denominations in the Kampen dataset in maintaining a higher proportion of baptised members than confessing members for so long. The gap grew until 2004, after which it closed very quickly; by 2015, the proportion was equal again, and seemed to be trending towards a reversal, with more confessing members than baptised members. In 1980, there was a distinct peak in baptised members, indicating that the schism of that year had drawn mostly confessing members to the GGN (bv). This pattern was reversed in 1998, when a proportional increase of confessing members apparently took place. The reason for this anomaly is unclear, as is the reason for the closing of the gap between 1999 and 2015.

Although unusual, the higher number of baptised members can be explained. In the first place, families are much larger in the GGN due to stricter views on the position of women and contraception within experientialist circles. In general, therefore, there will be more young children in the GGN than in other, nonexperientialist denominations. We may assume that that birth rate in the GGN, as in the GG, is much higher than it is for the overall Dutch population. This likely represents the main cause of the high share of baptised members. Young people in the GGN do not seem to delay or avoid public confession any more than they do in other denominations. Public confession is seen more as the reaffirmation of the promise parents made at baptism and a rite of passage to full membership, rather than as a means to gain admission to the Holy Supper. Confession does indeed confer the right to attend the Lord's Supper, but this is not a divine right, as participation in the Holy Supper is thought to require regeneration. For that reason, the large proportion of baptised members is more likely to be accounted for by large families in the GGN than by baptised members putting off public confession.

There is no information available on the age at which people in the GGN generally become confessing members, but I would still like to compare the group of baptised members to the under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands:



Figure 11.6. Baptised members in the GGN and under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands

Figure 11.6 shows the percentage of baptised members in the GGN compared to the percentage of people in the Netherlands under the age of twenty. The line for the GGN hovers at or over 50%, which would seem to suggest that half of the GGN membership is under the age of twenty. Any decline that occurred in the Netherlands between 1960 and 1980 due to the sexual revolution and the advent of contraceptive methods, however, is completely absent in the GGN. Therefore, we can assume that birth rates in the GGN remained at the levels at which they used to be. Given the (partial or complete) absence of relevant statistics, the death rate and border traffic for the GGN cannot be determined, even though the level of growth in the GGN is so strong that one can safely assume a high rate of birth, even if people are leaving the denomination.

### 11.4. Border traffic in the GGN

The GGN started publishing information on border traffic in the yearbook of 2014, and then reported data from the preceding five years. This means that there is information available for the period from 2010 to 2015. The GGN only publish an overview of the origin and destination of incoming and outgoing members, but this can be compiled into the following figure presenting the overall statistics on migration in the GGN:



Figure 11.7. Incoming and outgoing GGN members

This graph shows that the number of outgoing members in the GGN is larger than that of the incoming members. Total membership would therefore shrink if growth was influenced solely by border traffic. From earlier parts of this chapter, however, we know that the GGN were still growing by 2015, indicating high birth rates, as one might indeed expect. The year 2011 shows a large peak in new members. These are members from the GGN (bv) who were returning to the GGN after an initial split in 1980 due to conflict. Both incoming and outgoing members show a larger proportion of baptised members to confessing members. This can be accounted for by the large families in the GGN. Parents who leave for a different church take their (many) children with them, resulting in these high numbers.

The information can be presented in further detail, showing the origins and destinations of incoming and outgoing members:



Figure 11.8 Incoming GGN members by church of origin

This figure shows that the largest numbers of members came from the GGN (bv) and OGG, both of which are stricter than the GGN. The influx from the GG is very small, even though the GG and GGN denominations are historically related. Some members came over from the PKN, HHK, and CGK each year, but once again, these numbers were very small.



Figure 11.9. Outgoing GGN members by church of destination

By far the largest number of outgoing members went to the GG, which are slightly less strict than the GGN. The HHK is also a common destination. Interestingly, the 'unknown' also represent one of the largest categories. These might reflect people who leave the GGN and do not yet know where they will go next, or people who leave the church altogether.

# 11.5. The development of local churches

There are a final few statistics to be presented, mostly concerning the number of local churches in the GGN and their size. Figure 11.8 shows the total number of local churches in the denomination:



Figure 11.8. The number of local churches in the GGN

Interestingly, the general assumption is that the GGN started out with 52 churches (Van Middelkoop, 2009, p. 355), but this does not seem to be the case. Of course, in the early years congregations were still switching denominational affiliation, but by 1959 the number of GGN local churches seems to have plateaued somewhat at 48. Thereafter, the number of churches continued to grow until it reached 57 in 1980. That year, four congregations broke off from the denomination, and the GGN was left with 53 or 54 churches. The number of local churches fluctuated regularly until 2003, when the number of GGN congregations started to decrease. In 2009, two churches rejoined the GGN from the GGN (bv).

As the denomination as a whole was growing and the number of churches clearly did not increase, average congregation size grew:



Figure 11.9. The average number of members per local church in the GGN

The average church size at the beginning of GGN history seems to have been around 275 members, but in 2015 local churches averaged over 500 members. For years, two congregations were an exception to this average; the GGN in Barneveld, with 3,883 confessing members in 2020, and the GGN in Opheusden, with 2,399 members. The lack of newly instituted congregations is mostly to be attributed to the immense shortage of ministers. People in the GGN often move from a smaller, vacant congregation to a larger one that does have its own minister. The GGN have their own school for training ministers; in 2016, this school had three instructors and two students, one of whom graduated that year. The next year, no new students were admitted (Deputaatschap Theologische School GGN, 2016). This shows that the GGN were dealing with a shortage of ministers that was much larger than the shortage we saw in the GG.

#### 11.6. Conclusions

The GGN make up the smallest denomination in the Kampen dataset, with around 24,000 members. This makes them slightly smaller even than the NGK, although the GGN do show the strongest growth of all denominations in the dataset. However, even in this denomination, growth was halting by 2015 and seemed to stop altogether. The GGN are nearly unique in having more baptised members than confessing members. The only other denomination with this characteristic is the HHK. This distribution is probably also to be ascribed to doubts regarding the certainty of salvation. These views on faith are also behind

the shortage in ministers. As a result, the number of local churches neither grew nor shrank, indicating that there are very few ministers, who have to lead a considerable number of local churches. Another result is the continued growth of average congregation size.

The demographic statistics for the GGN are missing, but they can be expected to be somewhat similar to those of the GG: high birth rates, making up for the deaths and the outgoing members. However, one may assume that loyalty to the denomination is high in the GGN. We do know of some border traffic between the GGN and the GG, mostly in the direction of the latter, and between the GGN and the HHK, but other churches in the dataset are noticeably absent. The shift from right to left is similar to what we saw in the GG data.

# 12. Hersteld Hervormde Kerk

The final denomination in the dataset is the HHK. It has existed since the foundation of the PKN, but did not start collecting data on its membership until 2010, which means that there are very few data to work with for this project. The reason for the inclusion of a *Hervormde* church in this research project is that most of the HHK consists of former adherents of the *Gereformeerde Bond*, that is, the *Gereformeerde* modality within the *Hervormde* church. The HHK expressly consider themselves *Gereformeerd*.

This chapter will give a description of the available data on HHK membership, growth, and composition. The dearth of statistical information will makes this a short chapter.

### 12.1. Data description and analysis

The HHK represents a fairly new denomination, and it did not immediately started collecting statistical information. Therefore, there is very little to show in the way of development. The available data are summarised below:

Year	Membership	Average annual growth	Share of Dutch pop- ulation	Local congrega- tions	Municipal- ities with HHKs	Local congre- gation size
2010	56,418		0.34%	115	80	491
2015	58,821	0.83%	0.35%	116	80	507

Table 12.1. Summary statistics of the HHK

# 12.2. Development of membership numbers

The HHK is a medium-sized denomination with around 60,000 members. However, HHK numbers need to be interpreted with care, as membership is defined differently than it is in most *Gereformeerde* churches. Historically, the gap between *Hervormde* membership and church attendance is large, meaning that many people are members although they do not feel affiliated with the church. This is exemplified, for instance, by the local congregation in Staphorst, which officially has 5,000 members but a building seating 2,300, and only holds two services on Sundays, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. All members are expected to attend both services. Therefore, it is not certain how many active members the HHK have as opposed to paper members. On the other hand, church attendance is highest among experientialist church members. Since the HHK are an experientialist denomination, we can still assume that their administration is quite representative of actual membership, although it is less so than it is in the GG or the GKv, for instance.

Having discussed the definition of membership in the HHK, we can now look at its development:



Figure 12.1. The development of the number of members in the HHK

The HHK has grown slightly since the beginning of data collection, from 56,500 members to 59,000, an increase of around 4%. The growth was stable and seemed to be continuing. Data collection in later years will have to bear out whether this trend has continued after 2015. Because data collection started a few years after inception, we can assume that the growth will remain fairly stable; the initial growth that comes with the institution of a denomination is probably absent from this graph, as that phase took place before the beginning of data collection. The SCP (2006, p. 31) estimates HHK membership to be around 53,900, indicating that the HHK has indeed grown from the beginning. An important phenomenon to keep in mind here is that the HHK, like the NHK and later the PKN, only removes members from their administration at their explicit request, while in the other denominations from the dataset also the church council may decide to remove members from the rolls if they have not attended church for an extended period of time. This means that there may be 85-yearold baptised members in HHK congregations who have not attended church for sixty years.

# 12.3. Demographic statistics

Information on the proportion of confessing members to baptised members was collected by the HHK denomination itself. Interestingly, the HHK has always had a higher number of baptised members than confessing members. This can partly be explained by high birth rates, which one might indeed expect on the basis of the HHK's identity as a more conservative church with ties to the GG, but it may also be due to the weight members attach to public confession and to Lord's Supper attendance, possibly waiting longer to do so. This is what indeed seemed to be happening in a few congregations. Finally, the proportion may also result from baptised members not being actively involved with the church. Even though they no longer attend worship and make no public confession of faith, they are still officially registered as members.



Figure 12.2. The proportion of baptised to confessing members in the HHK

The proportion of baptised members in the HHK is clearly higher than the proportion of Dutch citizens under the age of twenty. The latter number was around 25% in the 2010s, whereas in the HHK it decreased but remained over 50%. The proportion of baptised members is high, comparable only to that of the GGN. It does need to be kept in mind, however, that the HHK have many more older baptised members who do not participate actively in church at all than the other *Gereformeerde* denominations in the dataset do.

#### 12.4. Border traffic in the HHK

The relations between the HHK and other denominations can be approximated by examining border traffic. Although the HHK does not collect or publish these data, they can be reconstructed to some extent on the basis of the statistics on border traffic published by other denominations. The NGK make no record of people coming from or going to the HHK, perhaps indicating that their number is negligible. This assumption seems to be corroborated by the traffic with the GKv, a similar denomination, which is very low.



Figure 12.3. Incoming and outgoing HHK members by church of origin and destination

In contrast to what we saw in earlier chapters, the graph above shows both people who leave and people who enter the HHK, since the available information is so limited. The left side of the graph shows the destination denominations of outgoing HHK members in absolute numbers, while the right side shows the source churches of incoming members.

The church that had the most traffic with the HHK is the GG, with most people leaving in the direction of the HHK. As we already saw in chapter 10, there were many GG members who left for the HHK. Their number remained fairly stable, hovering between 400 and 500 people annually. No more than between 150 and 200 people went in the other direction. Around a hundred people left to the CGK each year, but a similar number passed from the CGK to the HHK, so that the numbers balance out. Most HHK traffic from other churches came from the GG. These statistics show that most of the HHK border traffic is with denominations that are close to it on Polderman's (1996) scale; members from denominations that are found on the 'hermit' side of that scale and have stricter views on Scripture, faith, and Christian lifestyle often move to churches that feel more involved in the world and have more lenient views on various points. The graph in figure 12.3 also shows that the number of incoming members in the HHK, as far as we can reconstruct it, was larger than the number of outgoing members. This, in conjunction with an assumed high birth rate as in the other experientialist churches, accounts for the growth of the HHK denomination.

# 12.5. The development of local congregations

A final statistic that is available concerns local congregation size. This average increased somewhat over the years, from 490 to 510, which is not a drastic rise. However, additional information from future years will be needed to determine how HHK congregation size is developing.



Figure 12.4. The average number of members per local congregation in the HHK

# 12.6. Conclusions

The results presented in this chapter are extremely preliminary because the HHK has only existed for a short time since its separation from the PKN in 2004. In separating, the HHK does not actually add much to the overall number of experientialist Reformed people in the Netherlands, since these people were already there before the establishment of the PKN, although their group has now

gained greater visibility through their clear delineation. Because the denomination is so young, however, there is very little information available. We can only get an initial impression of this church thus far. The HHK constitutes a fairly large denomination, larger than the NGK and the GGN combined, although loose views on membership may be of influence on this number. In that sense, the HHK is a real people's church (*volkskerk*), a large church at the centre of a village that includes most people there among its membership and is strongly involved in local, everyday life. The denomination seemed to be growing, but there also were several years when the growth was not quite as strong. Like the GGN, the HHK had more baptised members than confessing members and is in this respect not reflective of the Dutch population. The future will have to show the further development of the HHK.

# 13. Gereformeerde Bond

As noted, the *Gereformeerde Bond* (GB) is an atypical group within the dataset for this study. Unlike any of the other groups that have been discussed, it is not an actual denomination, but an association within a denomination, originally the NHK, but later the PKN. As such, it has a board of directors, a secretary-general, and a central bureau where members are recorded. GB membership is open to all members of the NHK/PKN, as long as they are willing to subscribe to its ideas. The GB was founded in 1906 to keep the NHK true to the Reformed teachings and tradition, and it still exists today.

Data collection for the GB posed a problem, however. The *Bond* itself has no historical records of its members. The only information available to us came from guides with contact information on ministers who are GB members. The official GB administration does keep track of its members, but this information only exists for the past few years and has not been made public. For this reason, it could not be used in the Kampen dataset. Rather, since the guides containing information on the ministers were first published in the 1970s, data collection for the Kampen dataset starts for that year. The method used for the collection of data has been described in chapter 3 above, but will be repeated here in summary form for the sake of convenience. Information on the ministers was combined with data from the NHK and PKN yearbooks. Congregations with serving GB ministers were counted as GB congregations. All the members of these congregations were included in the dataset as GB adherents. If an NHK/PKN congregation had multiple ministers, and not all of them were GB, its members were included proportionally. No distinction was made between baptised, confessing, and birth members, as this would add very little to the way the data reflect reality. Baptised or birth members rarely have formal membership in the Bond, but they will probably still consider themselves as part of the GB if their parents are members.

Of course, such a method only yields an indication of the actual size of the GB. Since GB affiliation for a congregation is very different from membership of any of the denominations discussed in previous chapters, it is harder to give an accurate statistical description of this group. Having a GB minister does not as such make the entire congregation GB. Members of these congregations may consider themselves much more *Hervormd* or PKN than *Gereformeerd*, despite their minister, or the other way around. Members of *Hervormde* congregations may feel much more *Gereformeerd* than their minister, and they may even be members of the GB, but their congregation may still not count as a GB congregation in the dataset. In addition, congregations that had no minister for a time were not included in the dataset using the method described above, even though a congregation's identity does not change due to a pastoral vacancy. The resulting gap was addressed by taking the average numbers of adherents from

uninterrupted series of data. Also regrettable is the absence of information available from before 1974. Additionally, the data collection for 1974-2003 in the Kampen database was performed by different people than the data for 2005-2015. This ought not to have led to any noticeable differences, as the method was the same and a lot of work had gone into safeguarding continuity, but it must be noted that the process remained a difficult one.

In spite of its shortcomings, the method we applied was the closest we could get to statistics on the GB. There does not seem to be a better way to collect data on the GB. A good indication of the reliability of the data is that all the ministers who appeared in the GB guides could be matched directly to the NHK and PKN information. The present chapter complements the article by Smelik (2003) on the size and distribution of the GB. He used the same dataset and discussed its idiosyncrasies in detail, followed by an in-depth analysis of the statistical developments in the GB. His research will be repeated here and complemented with more recent data.

13.1. Data description and analysis

Year	Adherents	Average growth over ten-year period	Share of Dutch population	Number of local con- gregations	Municipal- ities with GBs	Average church size
1974	624,438		4.62%	262	130	2,383
1980	628,544	0.49%	4.46%	283	133	2,221
1990	676,489	0.53%	4.54%	316	150	2,141
2000	602,520	-1.16%	4.00%	328	159	1,837
2010	384,079	-4.66%	2.32%	282	137	1,362
2015	333,961	-2.51%	1.98%	275	129	1,214

The information on the GB can be summarised as follows:

Table 13.1. Summary statistics of the GB

This table shows that the GB amounts to a very large group of people, around the same size as the GKN. They made up around a quarter of the NHK. The GB grew until the 1990s, after which it started to decline. Its share of the Dutch population has likewise decreased, as have the number of local congregations and the number of municipalities with a GB congregation in them. In departure from the trend in most denominations, average congregation size has decreased rather than increased. However, the congregations themselves are very large, with 2000 as the overall average for the dataset. The statistics reflect a sharp decrease in Bond adherents between 2000 and 2010. It is difficult to account for this decline. We do know that around 50,000 people joined the HHK, but that number does not fill the gap. Instead, we may be dealing with a question of data collection. The problem will be elaborated on later in this chapter

### 13.2. Development of numbers of adherents

As noted above, it was very difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the size of the GB, and this same problem was already discussed by Van de Lagemaat (2013) in his thesis on the history and culture of the GB (p. 56-60). However, he too uses the information from the Kampen dataset as the closest available indicator.

The GB started out at 620,000 adherents in 1974, when data were first collected. It is regrettably impossible to say anything about its development prior to this point, by which time it already had a seventy-year history. Knippenberg estimates the number of *Gereformeerden* in the NHK at 0.57 million in 1920, indicating that the GB experienced strong initial growth, continuing steadily through the years. Given the 620,000 Bonders at the starting point for our data collection, the GB show much stronger growth than any of the *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Kampen database. The GB reached its peak in 1990, and then started to decline. The GB was quite stable until 1990, when the number of adherents started a sudden decrease from almost 700,000 to 300,000 in 2013.



Figure 13.1. The development of the number of GB adherents

It is difficult to determine whether the decline just noted is a true reflection of the development of the GB, or whether it reflects a problem with the dataset. Part of the reason why the GB has lost so many adherents may be the significant

decline in membership in its mother organisation, the NHK. Another possible reason is that part of the GB membership joined the HHK when the PKN was established. Added to this is the natural ageing that took place within the NHK and the PKN, meaning a declining birth surplus possibly combined with a death surplus, which may have affected the development of the numbers of GB adherents as well, as well as a potential shortfall in new adherents. The same picture emerges when we compare the development of GB numbers to that of the Dutch population:



Figure 13.2. The growth of the Dutch population and GB adherents

Until around 1990, the GB was able to maintain a growth rate that was on par with that of the Dutch population, its share in the nation's population also remaining steady. After that, however, the growth stopped, until in 2015 the Dutch population was 1.25 its 1975 size and the GB only 0.55. Figure 13.3 clearly shows how this GB decline compares to the growth of the Dutch population. As we can see, the growth indeed declined quite rapidly:



Figure 13.3. The relative growth of the GB and the Netherlands

The GB used to grow annually by around 1%, but in later years the rate of growth declined and even turned to an average annual decrease of 5%. Clearly, with such growth rate statistics, the GB could not keep up with the Dutch population.

A final statistic pertains to the number of ministers who were GB adherents, which is in fact the only information that is certain. Their number also represents the number of congregations that were counted as GB congregations.



Figure 13.4. The number of local congregations in the GB

Like the number of adherents, the number of congregations with a GB minister declined. However, the number of GB ministers started to drop much later, in 2004. There had been a total number of almost 340 ministers in 2003, but this dropped to 270 in more recent years. One possible explanation for this gap are the ministers who left for the HHK. This hypothesis seems to be supported by the start of the free fall in 2004. Other factors may also have contributed, however. The drop may, for example, have been due to an overall decline in ministers in the PKN, which was shrinking as a whole, or perhaps it was an indication of the GB's diminished popularity. It is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding this topic, although we can delve into it more deeply by comparing GB ministers and HHK ministers.

#### 13.3. Discussion of the GB data

As mentioned, data collection for the GB was complex and could not guarantee exact results. Therefore, a closer examination of the data is in order. Especially after 2004, when the number of GB adherents dropped suddenly, it is not quite clear what was going on. Assuming that data collection went as well as one might hope for in a situation like this, there are two possible explanations for the sudden drop. The first is that a number of ministers left the GB, and the second that the numbers of adherents declined more drastically than before. In the first case, the explanation must be sought in the GB data themselves; in the second, the information on the NHK and PKN needs to be examined more closely. We pursued both possible avenues, and will describe the results below.

#### 13.3.1. Ministers

The first hypothesis for explaining the sudden drop in GB adherents is that the total number of ministers decreased. As we defined GB adherents as NHK or PKN members who had a GB minister, the number of GB adherents calculated will decrease as ministers leave the GB. To test how many ministers had left, we made lists of their names and compared them between different years. A number of few years around the establishment of the PKN were chosen in order to provide more context to the development in these years, together with more data from 2005-2015 as a control to gauge the development in later years, without unusual circumstances. These data are presented in table 13.2:

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2005-2010	2010-2015
Same ministers	382	338	320	264	253
New ministers	15	13	36	21	20
Ministers out	24	69	32	18	22
Balance new ministers	-9	-56	4	3	-2

Table 13.2. Development of numbers of ministers

For most periods, this table shows a large number of ministers staying the same between years. Each year also sees a number of new ministers and a few who leave. These new pastors are probably accounted for by students who finish their theological schooling and start in their first congregation or by ministers who decide to become a member of the GB later on in life, while exiting ministers are those who retire or leave for other denominations. This table reflects between fifteen and twenty new ministers starting in the GB each year. The year 2005-2006, which followed the establishment of the PKN, is an exception, as there were many new ministers that year, possibly those who started in the GB to make up for the losses of 2004. On the other hand, in 2004-2005, there were 69 ministers who left the GB or retired, compared to around twenty in other years. The next year also reflects a higher number (32), although it is already more in line with the numbers for other years with the exception of the year when the PKN was founded.

A relevant question to ask is where the ministers who left in 2004-2005 went. As it turned out, most of them could be tracked down by comparing the names in the GB data to the names of HHK ministers in 2010, the year the HHK began collecting data:

Ministers GB and HHK	Number
Same ministers	39
Ministers HHK only	47
Ministers GB only	366

Table 13.3. Ministers who leave the GB for the HHK

As it turns out, 42 ministers who were in the GB in 2003 appear in the list of HHK ministers from 2010. They also disappeared from the GB address books, showing that they indeed left the GB when they joined the HHK. This information, in combination with the data on the numbers of ministers, shows that a significant numbers of ministers in the GB were indeed lost around the formation of the PKN, which may at least partly explain the decline in GB adherents around 2004. Almost half of the ministers who appear in the 2010 HHK yearbook and did not come from the GB started their pastoral work after 2004. Most of the others came from other NHK congregations within the PKN and some were supporters of the *Gekrookte riet*, a magazine first published in 1981 as a platform for ministers who sought to retain their experientialist identity within the NHK but had no membership in the GB.

#### 13.3.2. Membership

The second hypothesis for the sudden drop in GB adherents around 2004 is the parallel decline in PKN membership numbers. As the latter were the numbers we used to measure the GB, this phenomenon certainly had a large influence on the development. In order to determine what exactly happened, we compared the development of the PKN and the GB. For these purposes, the data used for the PKN came from the CBS (2016). For the period up to 2004, I added up the GKN and NHK data. For the period after 2004, I used the CBS's three categories of "*Protestants*", "*Hervormd*", and "*Gereformeerd*" as used by the CBS in order to give a complete image of the development of the PKN membership apart from sudden increases or decreases caused by the merger. These data were then compared to the information on the GB in the Kampen dataset. As the latter data are largely complete by 1975, that year was chosen as the starting point:



Figure 13.5. The development of the GB compared to the PKN

This graph shows that the PKN or its constituent denominations were already shrinking and continued to do so gradually after 1975. There was a drop in 2004, from which the PKN recovered somewhat, but then started to decrease more rapidly. The GB development is different. The GB was still growing in 1975 and continued to do so until around 1990, after which the growth became negative. The GB was influenced much more by the formation of the PKN than the PKN itself, suggesting that the members who left the PKN around 2004 mostly consisted of GB adherents who went on to establish the HHK. When the numbers for the HHK are added to those of the GB after 2010, part of the gap left in 2004 seems to be accounted for, although this does not explain the entire drop. After 2004, the GB mostly continued to decrease as it had since 1990. The losses in the GB can therefore be traced back largely to the HHK. This is further corroborated by the fact that the *Gereformeerde* counterpart of the HHK, which is the vGKN, only had 2,000 members and therefore had a much smaller impact on the growth of the PKN. Of course, the foundation of the HHK is a one-time event, while the decline in GB adherents continues after 2004. But there is also another factor related to the formation of the PKN that may have had an impact on GB membership. This is the fact that the NHK used to have birth members, that is, people who had not been baptised, but whose parents were (more or less active) members of the church. This type of membership was abolished at the establishment of the PKN, when other options were introduced. However, a change in membership type required informed consent from the member concerned. At that time, there may have been many people who opted out of membership altogether, since they had not made active use of it for years.

A comparison of the relative annual growth of the PKN and the GB also shows the difference in development of membership numbers. The growth data for the PKN come from the CBS (2016) and are not very specific, possible accounting for some of the larger fluctuations in the PKN data.



Figure 13.6. The growth of the PKN and the GB

On the whole, the growth of the GB was higher than that of the PKN between 1975 and 1990, but for both the PKN and GB the growth seems to have stayed quite stable at -1.3% until 2004. For the year 2004, both the PKN and the GB show a large decrease, although actual data are lacking for both groups and have been interpolated by taking the averages of 2003 and 2005. This process may not have led to entirely accurate results, but they are a good indicator nonetheless. The numbers for 2003 and 2005 are very likely to be accurate, so that the information for 2004 as presented above is probably a very good approximation of the actual situation. The only possible caveat is that not all of those who went to the HHK that year had cancelled their NHK membership yet. After 2004, the PKN and GB showed similar rates of decline at 2.9% and 2.7%, although the GB does show a little more stability here. This indicates that the growth of the GB is indeed largely dependent on that of the PKN. Since the PKN was shrinking, the GB also did, but the GB also had to deal with the large schism that occurred in 2004 and that had a much larger impact there than it did in the other PKN churches.

13.4. Conclusions

The GB represents a very special part of the dataset, since it is not an actual denomination, but an association within a denomination. Nevertheless, in this chapter we have made an attempt to present the available information. Insofar as we have been able to establish, the GB represents a large group of people. Its membership was smaller than that of the GKN, but at its peak it did have a number of adherents similar to what the GKN had at the end of its existence. However, the GB seems to have undergone a sharp decline, so that its membership in 2015 was half of what it once was. The highest number of GB adherents was in 1990, with around 600,000 members, but that number had dropped to around 300.000 in 2015. The number of ministers who are members of the GB seemed to have diminished strongly. Apart from this number, there is very little information available on the GB. The numbers for confessing members and baptised members were not collected, and are difficult to calculate. For the period after 2007, the proportion of confessing members to baptised members can be approximated and seems to have been around 60/40 in favour of the confessing members. However, since this figure has been established by the application of PKN statistics to the information on GB ministers, it may be more a reflection of the PKN as a whole rather than the GB. The problem for the PKN is that many people are leaving the church, but do not officially terminate their membership.

After 2004, the GB saw a steep drop in adherents that had no parallel in the PKN itself, indicating that most of those who left the PKN that year were GB adherents. As we saw, a number of GB ministers left in 2004 and joined the HHK. However, the combined numbers for the HHK and GB do not fully fill the gap left by the formation of the PKN. After 2004, the GB continued with a decrease similar to that experienced between 1990 and 2004.

In short, all that we can say with certainty with regard to the GB is that it once was very large, but shrank since. There was a sharp decrease in the number of ministers who were members of the GB, indicating perhaps a diminished interest in the *Bond* as a concept.

# 14. Conclusions

Now that all the information on the temporal development of Reformed denominations available in the dataset has been analysed, it is time to wrap up this discussion by comparing the statistical information for these denominations to each other and to the Dutch population, so that conclusions can be drawn regarding the similarities and differences between the denominations. This may give rise to further questions that will serve as a good starting point for further study, either here or in other work.

# 14.1. The growth of the churches

The development of the membership numbers was the first statistic discussed for each church. The growth patterns have been mapped below in figure 14.1, where the numbers for all churches have been put on an index, with the value of the beginning year, or the year when data collection had normalised, having been set as 1.



Figure 14.1. The development of the Reformed churches and the Netherlands

This figure enables us to compare the development of all the churches to each other and to the general development of the Netherlands. Several conclusions
can be drawn from it. The population of the Netherlands continued to grow in a straight line until 2015, the final year included in this study. The GKN followed this line until 1974, but then started to shrink. The CGK also ran parallel to the development of the Netherlands for some time, but likewise started to decline in membership in 1985. The same goes for the GKv, which had its peak in 2003, the NGK (2012), and the GB (1989), but not for the GG, GGN, and HHK, which all continued to grow at rates similar to that of the Dutch population. The discrepancy between the two groups of churches can be examined more closely by splitting figure 14.1 into two.



Figure 14.2. The development of the GKN, CGK, GKv, NGK, GB, and the Netherlands

This figure shows the development of the GKN, CGK, GKv, and the NGK as compared to that of the Dutch population. While the Netherlands kept growing in a straight line, all of these denominations show a similar development, where they began with strong initial growth, then a period of development paralleling – and sometimes even surpassing – that of the Dutch population. At a certain point, however, they all stopped growing and a decrease set in, producing an inverted U-shape. Although this U is stretched more widely or squeezed more narrowly depending on the denomination, every denomination still shows this basic development, with the relative peaks coming at different points in time: the GKN in 1974, the CGK in 1985, the GKv in 2003, and the NGK in 2012. Interestingly, the more recently the denomination was founded, the shorter the time between establishment and peak; for the GKN, this was 82 years; 93 in the CGK; 59 in the GKv; 45 in the NGK; and 82 in the GB, taking into account the years with missing data. This may mean two things: First, a peak and subsequent decline may be inevitable, occurring at ever earlier points in a church's natural life cycle. Second, the peaks and declines may be a sign of the times, where the church is influenced by developments in overall society. Of these two, the latter seems to be the most likely explanation. These hypotheses will be elaborated on in chapter 25. For now, however, it is clear that in most of the cases presented here, the peak coincides with the onset of decreasing birth rates and increasing in death rates and growing outgoing border traffic without new incoming members in compensation.

On the other hand, there are the experientialist churches, which show a different development:



Figure 14.3. The development of the GG, GGN, HHK, GB, and the Netherlands

The picture emerging from this figure is altogether different from that of the graph showing the orthodox churches. In figure 14.3, the development of the GG, GGN, HHK, and GB is comparable to that of the Dutch population. Unfortunately, the information on the HHK is very limited, as there are only six years of data available, so that we will focus on the GG and the GGN. The HHK does, however, confirm the image created by the latter two; all are churches that, after their inception and notwithstanding schism, continued to grow, at a faster and stronger pace than the Dutch population. As noted earlier on, there are no demographic statistics available for these churches, but their birth rates are generally estimated to be very high (Janse, 1985, p. 199; Knippenberg, 1992, p. 21; Dekker, 1992, p. 61), as the main cause of the growth they show. The same conclusion was also reached in chapter 9, where the GG were found to be growing

despite large numbers of members leaving the denomination. The GB is the exception to the pattern of the experientialist churches in that it stopped growing in 1990 and then started declining much more sharply than the Dutch population. Like other denominations resembling the GB in varying degrees (GKv, CGK, GG, HHK), also the GB showed itself to be subject to secularisation and declining birth rates. In addition, the GB represents a more liberal part of the experientialist world than the GG, GGN, and OGG, as can also be seen in Polderman's model. This once again raises the question whether the GB can be classified as an experientialist church; after all, its left wing is more middle-orthodox than experientialist.

An interesting phenomenon is that almost all the denominations that follow the development of peak and decline are orthodox, while nearly all the denominations that are growing as fast as or faster than the Dutch population are experientialist. This is one of the issues that will be discussed in more detail later on, in part IV.

### 14.2. Demographic developments

The second part of each chapter was dedicated to demographic development. Unfortunately, only five churches in the Kampen dataset had published this information. The demographic statistics for the GKN stopped in 1993, ten years before this denomination actually folded, while the GG did not start collecting these data until 2005. Nevertheless, the available information can be presented as below.



Figure 14.4. Birth rates in the Reformed denominations and the Netherlands

Births were measured by the number of child baptisms. A comparison of birth rates in the churches and in the Netherlands is very interesting. In the Netherlands, the birth rate started high, as the graph starts in 1947, with a peak in the aftermath of World War II. Almost all churches had higher birth rates than the Netherlands, except for the GKN. The drop in the GKN birth rate paralleled that of the Netherlands in the 1970s and then fell below the latter, ending with a birth rate of 0.9% compared to 1.3% in the Netherlands. The other churches all had higher birth rates. The CGK also show a slight drop after the sudden drop of the 1970s in the Netherlands, although it is not as large. The GKv started with an extremely high birth rate of 2.5% in 1975, compared to 1.25% for the Netherlands, but then declined gradually after 1985. The NGK were fairly stable, notwithstanding natural fluctuations due to small group size and total number of baptisms. The GG had the highest birth rates, around 2%, compared to 1% in the Netherlands. However, the GG line reflected a pattern of decline, suggesting that the initial number was even higher. It is interesting to note here that the Reformed denominations, or at least some of them, once generally opposed the use of birth control, banning contraception altogether at its introduction. Especially in experientialist denominations, the dominant view is that children are a gift from God. For that reason, as the argument goes, the natural process of pregnancy and birth should not be tampered with. In that vein, one might expect Reformed denominations to show no decline in birth rates at all. In fact, had their birth rates remained stable, church members would constitute an increasing part of the total population, as birth rates in the Netherlands are declining. This, however, proved not to be the case, and all Reformed churches show declining birth rates, which go some way in explaining their decreasing share in the total Dutch population.



Figure 14.5. Deaths in the Reformed churches and the Netherlands

The deaths in the Reformed churches are also interesting to examine. These too have been presented as a percentage of the total population and combined in a graph in figure 14.5. The first detail of note is that the death rates in all groups were lower than the birth rates. The death rate of the Netherlands has been stable throughout, at around 0.8%; it dropped somewhat in the 1990s, but returned to its normal rate in the 2000s. Most of the churches had a lower death rate than the Dutch population; the rates for the GKv and GG were the lowest of all, followed by the NGK. The GKN started out with a lower death rate than the Netherlands, but that rate grew over the years and showed signs of topping the Dutch death rate before 1993, but data collection stopped that year. The CGK also started with a lower death rate, but by 1993 it had surpassed the rate for the Dutch population. This may suggest that the CGK and GKN are the churches with the oldest membership, and the GKv and NGK with the youngest. Again, however, there is little information available on the age range in the churches. More will follow on this later.



Figure 14.6. Confessions in the Reformed churches

The number of confessions generally followed the same trend as the birth rate, albeit at a lower number, indicating that not all baptised members actually went on to make public confession of their faith and become confessing members. It may be that they were leaving church before becoming confessing members. In that case, they would still be registered as baptised members, leading to an overevaluation of baptised membership. Since the ages of outgoing baptised members are not included in the administration, this is difficult to verify.

Finally, some further information can be given on the normality of the age demographics in the churches by comparing the percentage of baptised members to the percentage of under-twenty-year-olds in the Dutch population:



Figure 14.7. Under-twenty-year-olds in the Netherlands and baptised members by denomination

The first conclusion that can be drawn from figure 14.7 is that the Dutch population has a much lower ratio of under-twenty-year-olds than all denominations in the Kampen dataset do. The discrepancy is also quite large. The Dutch population was composed of 38% under-twenty-year-olds in 1950, and 23% in 2015. The lowest percentage attained by any of the churches is 36%; this was the number for the NGK between 1992 and 2006, and for the GKv after 2006. These two denominations, as well as the GKN and CGK, also show a decrease in baptised members, but none as large as the decrease of under-twenty-year-olds in the Dutch population. The GG and GGN show no such decrease at all, and, together with the HHK, had the highest percentage of baptised members of all denominations, with, respectively, 45%, 52%, and 52% in 2015. This is probably due to the presumed high birth rates in these denominations, but perhaps also a result of different views on confession. It may well be that because these churches take public confession more seriously, those who make confession are generally older and therefore baptised members constitute a larger group than they do in other churches. For the HHK, however, it should be recalled that it does not remove members from its records except at their explicit request. This means that there may be any number of HHK-members who are much older than twenty.

### 14.3. Border traffic

There is some information available on incoming and outgoing members, but again, this information should be used with care as administration was not always accurate. For instance, the number of people leaving the GKv for the CGK as it has been registered by the GKv may not be the same as the number of people entering the CGK from the GKv as registered by the CGK. There is also the phenomenon that some people leave the church without notifying the appropriate administrative party, leaving them registered as members of a church they no longer attend. This discrepancy is very high in the Roman Catholic Church and in the PKN (CBS, 2016), but lower in Reformed churches. However, there will still be some discrepancy, more so in orthodox churches than in experientialist churches, but it cannot be measured.

### 14.3.1. Incoming and outgoing members

Notwithstanding the above caveats, some administrative records on incoming and outgoing members and their church of origin and destination do exist, and they can be compared.



Figure 14.8. Incoming members in %

Figure 14.8 shows the number of new members of a denomination as a percentage of the total membership. Incoming members are those who come from other denominations or were not yet members of a church. The graph shows that the churches with the largest influx are the GKN and the CGK, although the percentage of incoming members for the GKN decreased from over 6% to under 3% after the peak of 1974. The CGK had a percentage of around 4% until their peak, after which it stayed around 3%, making their decrease less marked than it was in the GKN. Incoming CGK members reached their peak in 1977, which was also noted in chapter 7 and turned out to be the result of a large part of the local GKN joining the CGK in Urk. Another peak occurred in 2006, which is also visible in the NGK. This can be explained by looking at figure 14.9, where the previous year shows a peak in people leaving the GKv, possibly due to a schism that took place there. The NGK started out with just a little over 1% new members each year, but rose rapidly to almost 3%. The GKv and the GG, on the other hand, had the smallest percentage of new members, with both staying steadily under 1%, showing that they attracted very few new converts or members from other denominations. The pattern for the GGN is similar to that of the GG and GKv, except for the years that saw a return of members from the GGN (bv).

Some relevant conclusions can also be drawn regarding outgoing members. The first is that, with the exception of the GKN, all churches show increasing numbers of outgoing members:



Figure 14.9. Outgoing members in %

Apart from that, the picture for outgoing members virtually reflects that for incoming members; the GKN had the highest percentage of outgoing members, followed by the CGK. The percentage for the NGK was almost equal to that of the CGK, both hovering between 2% and 3% of outgoing members each year. The GG show the next highest percentage of outgoing members, with roughly 1.5% annually. The GKv had the lowest relative number of people leaving, but also showed the highest increases in recent years. In 2008, the GKv passed the GG, and by 2015, they were very close to overtaking the NGK. The GGN were close to the GKv and NGK.



Finally, in order to compare the two figures presented above, the balance of people entering and leaving the churches can be examined:

Figure 14.10. Balance of people entering and leaving churches

This graph shows the percentage of growth that can be ascribed to people entering and leaving the different denominations. As we have seen, the GKN clearly had larger numbers of people leaving than entering, as their growth percentage remained below zero and ranged from -0.5% to -1.5%. The CGK, on the other hand, would grow if we were to look only at the incoming and outgoing traffic. However, the balance also shifted, and decreased from 3% in 1962 to -0.5% in 2015. The GKv also did not experience growth due to traffic. Although they started out ever so slightly above zero, their rate quickly dropped below that level, leaving them with an immigration growth of -1.3% in 2015. The NGK did have a higher influx of incoming than outgoing members and remained fairly stable that way. The GG, however, had a negative balance. They started out with very light growth, but the balance turned negative in 1973 and remained that way. The GGN had a large growth peak in 2011, with the return of a number of members from the GGN (bv), but aside from that year, the average migration growth was -1.2%.

The above reflects that, as suggested by the earlier conclusions reached in this chapter, the birth rates in all Reformed denominations were higher than the rates of death, a phenomenon which must account for the growth they show, if any. The traffic with other churches and new converts (i.e., people who were registered as coming from 'no church'; unfortunately, not every denomination kept track of this group) yield a positive growth only early on in the CGK and in the NGK. Other churches show higher numbers of outgoing than incoming members. This once again indicates how important birth rates are for churches; while immigration allowed the Dutch population to continue to grow with a declining birth rate, this situation does not apply to the churches studied.

# 14.3.2. The direction of border traffic

In addition to the information presented above, there are also statistics available on the direction of border traffic and on the churches of origin and destination for incoming and outgoing members. Janse published a graphic presentation, made by André Dorst, of the data for the ten-year period from 2008 to 2018 in the *Reformatorisch Dagblad* (2018, 22 September), based on the Kampen dataset:



Figure 14.11. Border traffic between Reformed churches in the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>

This figure shows the directionality of border traffic between the denominations in the dataset, as well as some others. In what follows, other information on the earlier years as presented in preceding chapters will also be taken into account.

The GKN have historically had the most border traffic with the NHK, the denomination from which they originated and with which they eventually merged to form the PKN. In the early years after the *Vrijmaking*, there was also a small influx from the GKv, consisting of people who had initially joined the *Vrijmaking* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This figure uses the abbreviation GGiN for GGN

but later changed their mind. This group reached a peak in 1951, and there was another spike in 1968, when many people from the GKV left for the GKN in order to avoid the schism occurring there. There is very little information available on the destination of people leaving the GKN, but we do know that significant numbers left the PKN for the CGK. It is unclear, however, whether these were GKN members or GB members, or perhaps even members from one of the other PKN modalities. However, since traffic with the HHK grew from 2004 onwards, one might surmise that PKN members going to the CGK mostly hailed from the GB. Beginning in 2003, there was also an increasing number of GKy members going to the CGK, as well as a fair number of people from the GG. Incoming CGK members from these years hailed from other Reformed formations, which are nevertheless left unspecified in their vearbooks. People leaving the CGK mostly went to the GKN/NHK, or to the PKN and HHK. People also left the CGK for the GKv (albeit not as many as there were coming in from the GKv) and the NGK. An increasing number of CGK members could also be found leaving for evangelical churches.

Most people entering the GKv came from PKN churches. Small numbers came from the NGK and CGK. A lot of the incoming members hailed from miscellaneous denominations. Outgoing GKv members left in all directions. Many of them went to the PKN or GKN and NHK, some went to the NGK and CGK, but the greatest majority went to evangelical churches or indicated no destination.

The NGK similarly had the most traffic with the PKN. Significant numbers of people also entered from the CGK and GKv, but few left to go in the opposite direction. Instead, most outgoing NGK members went to the PKN and to evangelical churches.

The largest number of people entering the GG came from the GGN and OGG, while most outgoing GG members left for the NHK and HHK.

Taking all of this into consideration, we can draw several conclusions regarding the general movements of church members in the period under study:

- There was a large exodus from all denominations, with the exception of modern Protestant and experientialist churches, to the evangelical movement.
- There was a large stream of people leaving strict orthodox churches to less strict ones: a move from the GKv and the CGK to the GKN in earlier years, and, more recently, from the GKv to the NGK, but also from the GKv and CGK to the moderate wings of the NHK/PKN.
- There was a small number of members who felt troubled that their denomination was no longer orthodox. This movement used to go from the GKN to the CGK, but later shifted from the GKv to the CGK.
- A large number of members left strict experientialist churches for less strict ones: from the OGG and GGN to the GG and HHK, and from the GG to the CGK, HHK, or GB.

• And, finally, a fair amount of people went from experientialist churches (GG and GB) to the moderate wings of the NHK/PKN.

All of these conclusions suggest a general shift in Poldeman's model from the right to the left, from hermit to citizen. Many people left their church for a less strict church. Repeating Polderman's (1996, p. 251) model here, we can illustrate this:



Figure 14.12. The scale of involvement in the world, according to Polderman (1996, p.251)

# 14.4. The local churches

Finally, all chapters discussed the number of local churches for the respective denominations. It is not useful to compare the absolute number of local congregations, since they relate directly to the size of the denomination. However, the average congregation size can be presented:



Figure 14.13. Average number of members per local church in the Reformed churches

Figure 14.13 shows that the GKN, the largest denomination, also had the largest local churches, reaching an average membership of over 1,000 in 1977, but dropping thereafter. The CGK show a similar, but less marked development;

their average local church size also increased, only to decrease later on. Average congregation size grew also in the GKv, but this development seemed to have come to a halt around 2005. Interestingly, all other churches showed an increase in average congregation size; these also happened to be the denominations that had only stopped growing recently or were still growing at the end of data collection. The GG, GGN, and HHK were also dealing with minster shortages, rendering the establishment of new local churches difficult, as no ministers were available to lead them. Interestingly, however, denominational growth was not always accompanied by the institution of new local churches, but by a growth in existing congregations instead. Another factor of influence was the increased mobility of the average churchgoer. Once every family had a car and no qualms about using it on Sundays, it became much easier to travel to a church that was slightly further away, decreasing the need for new local churches.

# 14.5. Conclusions

In the end, the following list of conclusions can be drawn regarding temporal development:

- 1. There are some denominations (GKN, CGK, GKv, NGK, and GB) that started with strong growth, paralleling or surpassing the growth in the Dutch population, only to reach a peak and then to decline.
- 2. Other denominations (GG, GGN, HHK) did not show this pattern, but continued to grow, even in spite of schisms.
- 3. Schisms only seemed to influence a denomination's growth for several years. After the schism had run its course and membership had stabilised, the mother denomination continued growing at its normal rate.
- 4. Some denominations started out with a higher proportion of baptised members than confessing members (GKN, CGK, GG, GGN, and HHK). Some maintained this proportion (GGN, HHK), but the other denominations ended up with a higher proportion of confessing members. The GKv and NGK always had higher numbers of confessing members than baptised members.
- 5. Birth rates were almost always higher than death rates, also surpassing birth rates in the Dutch population. The only exception to both rules were the GKN.
- 6. Death rates were generally lower than they were in the Dutch population; the two exceptions were the GKN and the CGK.
- 7. There were larger numbers of people leaving churches than joining them; this was not the case for the NGK, or for the CGK in the earliest phase studied.
- 8. The deficiency left by the negative balance of border traffic was generally compensated by the birth rates, until the deficiency became too large and

the birth rate declined too much. At that point, denominations started to shrink in size.

- 9. There were fewer confessions than births, meaning that there were baptised members who left before making public confession.
- 10.There were more under-twenty-year-olds in churches than in the Dutch population.
- 11.Members moved from right to left when they switched denominational affiliation; they more often left stricter denominations for more lenient ones than the other way around.
- 12. When a denomination was experiencing growth, such growth was accommodated by increasing local church size rather than the planting of new local churches.

Some of these conclusions will be examined in further detail in part IV, where we will return to conclusions 1 and 2 as hypotheses to be tested. Aside from that, the main conclusions to be drawn are that orthodox denominations and experientialist denominations each showed distinct developments; that churches grew mostly due to birth surplus rather than border traffic; and that most people left strict denominations for more lenient ones.

Part III The spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, 1892-2015

# 15. Introduction to part III

Part III of this study will discuss and analyse the geographical distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset. The following chapters will therefore describe the distribution of the denominations in the country, over the provinces, and over the municipalities, and also examine the influence of urbanisation and segregation. To this end, each chapter will have the same structure:

- 1. The distribution of church members in the country will be presented using maps that show the membership as a percentage of the overall Dutch population in each municipality.
- 2. The distribution over the Dutch provinces can be shown in two ways. First, each chapter will include a graph showing the share of church members in each province as a percentage of the Dutch population. This will be followed by a graph showing the percentage of each denomination's members by province.
- 3. Next, the municipalities with the largest absolute and relative numbers of Reformed members will be discussed.
- 4. The population of each denomination will be divided into five degrees of urbanisation so as to show the size of municipality in which each denomination is most present.
- 5. Next, the geographical distribution of the growth of each denomination will be presented using maps showing where the growth and decline have taken place.
- 6. Finally, two measures of segregation will be presented: the dissimilarity index and the exposure index. The dissimilarity index shows the percentage of the minority population which would have to change location so as to attain an even distribution of the members of the denomination across the country. The exposure index reflects the chance of a member of one denomination meeting another member of the same denomination in any given place.

In a final chapter, these findings will be combined and compared, both between denominations and with the available information on the Dutch population, allowing generalised conclusions on the distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands.

However, there are several problems with the dataset that first need to be mentioned. The data for the GB, for instance, are not sufficiently complete at the municipal level to be able to provide maps or geographical information. This unfortunately makes it impossible to offer a chapter on the GB. Similarly, the HHK only has information available for several years, although it is at least accurate. Therefore, the chapter on the HHK will be shorter than most of the others.

# 15.1. Summary statistics of the Netherlands

In order to describe the geographical distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, it is useful to compare the analyses to the statistical information that is available for the overall Dutch population. For this reason, a summary of this information will be presented below, following the same structure that will be used in the chapters on the different denominations.

### 15.1.1. The distribution of the Dutch population

First of all, the distribution of the Dutch population over the Netherlands is presented below:





Figure 15.1. The geographical distribution of the Dutch population

These maps show the Dutch distribution at three different points in time; one at the beginning years of this study, one in the middle, and one at the end. The data reflect the percentage of the total population per municipality. A first remark that needs to be made is that the municipal borders used here are those of 2012, as described in chapter 3. Although municipalities like Zuidwest-Friesland did not exist back in 1900, I still show them on the first two maps, which reflect the situation prior to the 2012 reorganisation. This was done to ensure data uniformity and compatibility over the years, avoiding anomalies due to the rearrangement of municipalities.

There are several differences between the above maps, but also many similarities. The large cities of the so-called Randstad, namely Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht, made up a high percentage of the population in all periods. In 1900, the rest of the country was divided rather evenly, with slightly lower populations in Limburg, Overijssel, and the north of Noord-Holland.

By 1955, the distribution had become less even. The four large cities had grown, as had other cities, like Breda, Tilburg, Den Bosch, Nijmegen, Arnhem, Apeldoorn, and Groningen. The municipalities of the provinces of Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, and Zeeland all became less populated compared to the municipalities of other provinces. This shows how increasing mobility allowed people to move to the cities for work, leaving rural areas. Although the population in the countryside also grew in this period, it did so at a much lower rate than in the cities.

By 2015, the pattern had mostly remained the same. The Randstad continued to grow in population size but spread out a little more, indicating that people were moving from the cities themselves to surrounding areas. The province of Flevoland was officially opened in 1985, although the Noordoostpolder and Urk, for instance, had already existed for a long time, and Almere in particular shows a high relative number of inhabitants. Areas along the national borders, like the provinces of Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, Zeeland, and Limburg, seem to have continued their decline.

#### 15.1.2. The distribution over the provinces

Following the pattern described at the outset of this chapter, we will now move from developments on a national scale to the provincial level. The provinces are the twelve areas into which the Netherlands are divided, each with its own administration. Most of the provinces already existed at the beginning of the twentieth century, but Flevoland was not founded until 1985, when it was artificially created out of polders. Both Urk and Schokland were already in existence then. Urk had belonged to Noord-Holland until 1950, and then formed a part of Overijssel from 1950 to 1986, after which it was annexed to the new province of Flevoland. The Noordoostpolder, in the north of Flevoland, also used to be a part of Overijssel, until the opening of Flevoland. The reclaiming of land had already begun in 1930, so that several municipalities were founded before the opening of Flevoland and did not form a part of any province at all: Dronten in 1970, Lelystad in 1980, and Almere and Zeewolde in 1984.

Figure 15.2 depicts the number of Dutch inhabitants in each province at different points in time:



Figure 15.2. Dutch inhabitants per province

Figure 15.2 shows the total number of inhabitants per province in the three years of measurement. It reflects that Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, and Zeeland were indeed the smallest provinces. Flevoland only just started to grow in 2015, when it in fact was not much larger than Zeeland. Noord-Brabant, Zuid-Holland, and Noord-Holland are the largest provinces, which is unsurprising, because, as the next paragraph will show, these are the provinces in which almost all of the largest cities in the Netherlands are located. All provinces show an increasing population, although the increase is much smaller in some provinces than in others; the largest growth can be found in Gelderland, Noord-Brabant, Zuid-Holland, and Noord-Holland.



Figure 15.3. The distribution of the Dutch population by province

Figure 15.3 sheds more light on the statistics presented in figure 15.2, showing the percentage of the Dutch population living in each province. As it turns out, the share of the Dutch population living in both Friesland and Groningen decreased from over 6% in 1900 to 3.5% in 2015. The share of the Zeeland population likewise shrank, from 4% to 2%. Although Zuid-Holland and Noord-Holland are the largest provinces, their share of the Dutch population shrank. Zuid-Holland made up 22% of the population in 1900, but this percentage dropped somewhat to 20.5% in 2015. Noord-Holland's share decreased from 19% to 16.5%. Utrecht, on the other hand, increased from 5% in 1900 to 8% in 2015, while Noord-Brabant went from 10% to 15%. In 2015, Flevoland made up 2.5%

of the Dutch population. All other provinces remained stable at the value they had in 1900.

These changes can be explored in further detail if we look at the municipalities with the largest number of Dutch inhabitants and the degree of urbanisation.

#### 15.1.3. The distribution over the municipalities

Table 15.1 shows a list of the ten municipalities with the highest absolute number of inhabitants. All information comes from CBS and has been integrated into the Kampen dataset. For the municipalities, a concordance was used to bring them in line with the division of local governance as it applied in 2012:

1900		1955		2015	
Municipality	Inhabitants	Municipality	Inhabitants	Municipality	Inhabitants
Amsterdam	528,811	Amsterdam	865,237	Amsterdam	821,752
Rotterdam	340,458	Rotterdam	719,066	Rotterdam	623,652
The Hague	211,840	The Hague	596,675	The Hague	514,861
Utrecht	109,710	Utrecht	250,923	Utrecht	334,176
Haarlem	72,986	Haarlem	166,154	Eindhoven	223,209
Groningen	70,118	Eindhoven	151,742	Tilburg	211,648
Arnhem	57,669	Groningen	148,836	Groningen	200,336
Leiden	57,482	Tilburg	136,345	Almere	196,932
Zuidwest-	54,334	Nijmegen	120,104	Breda	180,937
Friesland					
Dordrecht	44,330	Arnhem	118,178	Nijmegen	170,681

Table 15.1. The top ten largest Dutch municipalities

These lists show that the four largest cities in the Netherlands have remained the same since 1900: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. Apart from these four, Groningen is the only other municipality to appear on all three lists. The remaining five municipalities on the list for 1900 had all disappeared by 2015. The appearance of Zuidwest-Friesland on the first list interesting, as it is not densely populated, but has a very large surface area. It also comprises 83 villages and six cities, which together add up to a rather large number of inhabitants.

In 1955, Arnhem and Haarlem once again numbered among the nation's largest cities, although Arnhem had dropped a few places. Eindhoven, Tilburg, and Nijmegen are new appearances. The latter two both have universities that were founded in the 1920s, which may account for the increase in population. In addition, Tilburg is a highly industrialised city, ensuring new job opportunities. Eindhoven also has a university, but it was not established until 1956. Instead, the growth may have been due to people moving there because of the job

opportunities created by the Philips and DAF factories, which opened in 1891 and 1928, respectively.

In 2015, Arnhem and Haarlem disappear from the list and make room for Almere and Breda. Almere was built to relieve the housing market in Amsterdam and to stimulate people to commute to work. Breda just happens to be a very large city that grew very steadily over the years.

### 15.1.4. Urbanisation in the Netherlands

As the previous section showed, the largest cities are the places where most of the Dutch population can be found. The only exception to this was the municipality of Zuidwest-Friesland, which appeared on the list for 1900 due to the large surface area it covers. For a further description of the population distribution, we have used the degree of urbanisation as defined by the CBS, based on the number of households or addresses. Figure 15.4 shows the relationship between degree of urbanisation and number of inhabitants.



Figure 15.4. The development of the Dutch population and the degree of urbanisation

The first bit of interesting information in this graph is that the Netherlands used to be structured largely by urbanisation; the highest number of inhabitants could be found in the G4 (*grote vier*, or big four), followed by highly urbanised areas, like Nijmegen, Zwolle, and Alkmaar; then came the moderately urbanised municipalities, like Goes, Zutphen, and Culemborg; and the slightly urbanised municipalities, like Leek, Loon op Zand, and Scherpenzeel. The smallest portion of the population lived in non-urbanised areas, like Schiermonnikoog, Dirksland, and Dalfsen. Over the years, however, this distribution changed, and

this is most visibly in the largest cites. The G4 initially kept growing at a steady pace, but from the 1920s onwards, people started moving away from the larger cities, whose populations generally decreased as a result, with a notable dip around World War II. After the war, the four big cities started to grow again, but this growth stopped in the 1960s. Again, people started moving away as car ownership and (social) mobility increased. The result was a boost in growth of moderately and slightly urbanised places. Even rural municipalities started growing from 1965 onwards, reflecting the movement of people leaving to the country for a quiet life.



Figure 15.5. The population of the Netherlands in different areas of urbanisation

Figure 15.5 shows the same information, but with each area of urbanisation as a percentage of the total Dutch population, indicating that most people lived in highly urbanised areas. These are not the largest cities in the Netherlands, but still important places. The percentage of G4 inhabitants quietly diminished from 1965 onwards, as they moved to other areas that were either highly urbanised, moderately urbanised, or slightly urbanised, leading to increases there. Rural areas lost inhabitants relative to the other places.

# 15.2. The geographical distribution of the growth in the Netherlands

The growth that occurred in the Netherlands has already been discussed to some extent by comparing the maps of the distribution in 1900, 1955, and 2015 and the changes in the provinces. In this section, however, we will be presenting

the growth in the Netherlands and the precise location where that growth took place.



Figure 15.6. The geographical distribution of the growth in the Netherlands

The maps in figure 15.6 show that most of the Netherlands grew and continued to grow by somewhere between 0 and 5% annually. There were eight municipalities that shrunk over the first period, from 1900-1955, by up to 0.75%. There are, however, no common characteristics that would explain this decline, so that the absence of growth can be assumed to have been random. Between 1956 and 2015, most municipalities once again grew by between 0 and 5%, although Flevoland experienced a much more significant increase, especially in Lelystad and Almere. There are nineteen municipalities that shrank, by up to 1.3%. Among them are Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Haarlem. All four are either G4 cities or highly urbanised places, suggesting that the decrease in inhabitants was probably due to the suburbanisation shift we observed earlier in this chapter. Apart from these municipalities, most of the places that shrank can be found at the edges of Groningen, Friesland, and Zeeland.

The statistics presented above show a summary of the geographic distribution of the Dutch population. As we have seen, the population levels in the larger cities started out high, but in second half of the 1960s, a shift occurred when people began moving to less urbanised areas. Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland are the largest provinces, but their growth dampened by those leaving such municipalities as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague. A more marked decline can be detected around the northern and southern edges of the country, however, indicating an emptying of the countryside.

# 16. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

The history of the GKN has been described in some detail in part I of this dissertation (see chapter 2). In the present chapter, we will reference this history whenever relevant to the geographical distribution of the GKN.

## 16.1. The distribution of GKN members in the Netherlands

#### 16.1.1. The national distribution

As noted before, the GKN denomination is a very large one, the largest in the Kampen dataset, in fact. It is therefore fitting for its membership to show the most even spread over the Netherlands. Figure 16.1 shows where the members of the GKN lived in the early phase, in 1900, where they lived at the denomination's peak in 1975, and where they could be found at the end, in 2003, a year before the foundation of the PKN. The maps below show GKN members as a percentage of each municipality.





Figure 16.1. The distribution of the GKN in shares of the Dutch population

The areas most densely populated with GKN members were in Friesland in particular, but also parts of west Gelderland, with municipalities like Apeldoorn, Ede, and Barneveld show high GKN membership numbers. A notable share of members could be found in Zuid-Holland and Groningen. Membership was also visible in Drenthe, although less so than in the aforementioned places. There were also many members in Noord-Holland, around Amsterdam, but the north of Noord-Holland was much less densely populated by GKN members. The distribution remained roughly the same throughout the years, although one can observe a shift away from the Randstad, together with the emergence of GKN members in Flevoland. This illustrates the GKN's goal to give everybody the opportunity to attend a *Gereformeerde* church, meaning that the denomination pursued a distribution similar to that of the Dutch population. In doing so, the GKN are the only denomination in the Kampen dataset to have had a high membership in large cities. By 1975, GKN membership became more common in Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, and Gelderland. By 2003, the GKN had shrunk so much that their population in the north of the country shows most prominently on the map.

For every year recorded in figure 16.1, Limburg remained mostly empty, as did the eastern parts of Noord-Brabant. This is due to the very high membership rates for the Catholic Church in those parts of the country. The west of Brabant did have a fair number of GKN members, which is interesting. All of this seems to suggest that the distribution of the GKN is related at least to some extent with

the Dutch Bible belt; this suggestion will be discussed in further detail in chapter 28, in part IV of this dissertation. The Bible belt is a strip of land in the Netherlands with a high concentration of experientialist churches. It stretches from Zeeland to the Betuwe and into the Veluwe, to the north of Overijssel. It includes also parts of Zuid-Holland and Utrecht. Geographically, this means that a small corner of Noord-Brabant also forms a part of the Bible belt. Some further digging into the data reveals that the municipalities in Brabant with the highest shares of GKN members are either the region's larger cities (Eindhoven, Tilburg, Den Bosch, and Breda), which is a phenomenon typical for the GKN, while others are municipalities in the northwest corner of the province (Werkendam, Moerdijk, Woudrichem, etc.), which are part of the Bible belt.

#### 16.1.2. The distribution over the provinces

The distribution of GKN members in the Netherlands can be examined in finer detail. To that end, we will zoom in on the distribution by province. The first statistic concerns the percentage of GKN members in an entire province, calculated by dividing the number of GKN members by the total population in each province and then multiplying by 100. The result is the following overview at the beginning of the GKN's history, at their peak, and right before their merger into the PKN:



Figure 16.2. The share of GKN members per province

For most provinces, figure 16.2 shows an observable downward trend, especially between 1975 and 2003. Not a single province showed an increase in the share of the population. The trend is slightly different for the period between 1900 and 1975, as the share of GKN members grew somewhat in Drenthe and Gelderland, and to a significant degree in Friesland. However, by 2003 most provinces showed a much lower share than they had in 1900, with the exception of Friesland, indicating once again that Friesland had a higher than average proportion of GKN members. Even in 1900, Friesland was the strongest GKN province, staying that way until the GKN folded, unlike Groningen, which dropped in spite of a similar starting position.

Another way of mapping this information is to examine the distribution of the GKN by province as a share of the denomination's total population:



Figure 16.3. The distribution of GKN members by province

Figure 16.3 shows that by far the largest group of GKN members lived in Zuid-Holland, amounting to more than 25% of the denomination's population. After the 1970s, the percentage dropped to around 22%. The same phenomenon can be observed in Noord-Holland, where 13% or 14% of the GKN members used to live, but after 1970 this percentage started shrinking, reaching 8% in 2003. Friesland was the GKN's next largest province, with between 12 and 15% of the membership. Gelderland and Groningen also housed around 10% of the GKN members, but Gelderland shows the most growth, going from 7% in 1900 to 13% in 2003. Drenthe is also notable, as only 4 to 7% of the GKN members lived there; nevertheless, given that this province hosted a stable 3% of the total Dutch population, the percentage of GKN members there is comparatively large. The same goes for Groningen, with 13%-8% of GKN members compared to 6-

3% of the Dutch population. However, the GKN population in Groningen did decrease in line with the general decline of the Dutch population. Overijssel, Utrecht, and Flevoland showed some growth, but only by a few percent. The smallest groups of GKN members were still found in Noord-Brabant, with an average of 3%, and in Limburg, with under 1%.

These developments are reflective of a suburbanisation process; the provinces with proportionally the largest groups of GKN members used to be Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland, showing that the most densely populated areas of the Netherlands were also where the highest concentrations of GKN members could be found. However, as the population in these provinces decreased, other areas grew. These were, most notably, Gelderland and Friesland. The share of the overall Dutch population in Gelderland stayed very stable, indicating that the growth of the GKN is remarkable there. The same goes for Friesland, where the share of the Dutch population underwent a sharp decrease, while the GKN did not. This is indicative of the remarkable phenomenon that the GKN represent a disproportionally large denomination in Friesland and Gelderland. This is not unexpected for Gelderland, whose western part is historically an emphatically Reformed area, as we will see in later chapters. Friesland, however, is unique; the GKN is the only denomination that had so many members there, both absolutely and proportionally. To explore these observations in more detail, we now turn to the distribution of the GKN at the municipal level.

#### 16.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

The following statistics showing the distribution of the GKN in the Netherlands pertain to the municipalities with the most members. There are two ways to measure this: by absolute numbers, meaning the total number of GKN members in a given municipality, and by relative numbers, meaning the GKN as a percentage of the local population. Both are presented and discussed below.

1900		1975		2003	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Amsterdam	28,085	Rotterdam	31,385	Zuidwest-Fries- land	11,025
Rotterdam	24,427	The Hague	22,130	Hardenberg	10,716
Zuidwest- Friesland	9,968	Amsterdam	18,840	Smallingerland	10,163
The Hague	8,179	Groningen	14,717	Westland	9,938
Utrecht	7,633	Zuidwest- Friesland	14,592	Hoogeveen	9,299
De Marne	5,503	Utrecht	12,605	Tytsjerksteradeel	9,050
Dongeradeel	5,390	Leeuwarden	12,327	Dongeradeel	9,036
Hardenberg	7,446	Smallinger- land	11,644	Rotterdam	9,034

Kampen	4,738	Westland	11,403	Katwijk	8,607
Hoogeveen	4,620	Dongeradeel	10,750	Barneveld	8,573

Table 16.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest number of GKN members

Table 16.1 shows the ten municipalities in the Netherlands with the highest GKN population by absolute numbers, at the beginning (1900), in the peak year (1975), and by the end (2003) of their history. The first detail of note is that the GKN went from being a denomination of the large cities to a rural denomination. In 1900, the largest GKN populations were found in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. These were also the largest cities in the Netherlands in 1900, in the same order. By 1975, however, the order had changed; the number of members in Amsterdam had shrunk by 10,000, while all the other municipalities that recur show an increase in membership. By 2003, The Hague and Utrecht had also disappeared from the list, leaving only Rotterdam remaining. This seems to indicate that the GKN used to be a national denomination, as membership numbers were related to the size of the total Dutch population. Large cities had many church members and small towns had fewer members. Slowly, however, this pattern shifted, as churches moved away from the cities to the countryside. This pattern will be explored further later on in this section, when we will link the development of the GKN to the degree of urbanisation in the Netherlands.

Aside from the large cities, smaller cities also make their way into the top ten. For 1900, Hardenberg, Kampen, and Hoogeveen are on the list. By 1975, they had all disappeared again, but Leeuwarden and Groningen now appear for the first time – both of them cities, but not among the largest four in the nation. On the list for 2003, we find Hardenberg and Hoogeveen returning, joined now by Katwijk and Barneveld.

A final observation that can be confirmed is that the GKN were very large in Friesland and, to a lesser degree, in Groningen. Between four and six of the municipalities in each list are located in the north of the Netherlands. As we saw on the maps in figure 16.1, the GKN was indeed well represented in the north. However, one should be aware that presentation influences the data. Since the figure shows absolute numbers, large municipalities in terms of surface area will almost certainly have large numbers of GKN members. Thus, the municipalities in Friesland are rather sparsely populated but generally very large, which may account for the presence of some of these municipalities on the lists. One way to circumvent this problem is to calculate the GKN members as a share of the Dutch population, as in table 16.2 below.

1900		1975		2003	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Bunschoten	85%	Urk	56%	Dongeradeel	36%
Urk	80%	Ferwerderadeel	51%	Ferwerderadeel	34%
Leiderdorp	77%	Dongeradeel	46%	Grootegast	32%
Barendrecht	56%	Grootegast	42%	Urk	32%
Maassluis	51%	Kollumerland en Nieuwkruisland	41%	Kollumerland en Nieuwkruisland	32%
Bedum	49%	Bedum	41%	Achtkarspelen	29%
Ferwerderadeel	44%	Loppersum	38%	Tytsjerksteradeel	29%
Kollumerland en Nieuwkruisland	42%	Winsum	37%	Bedum	27%
Leeuwarderadeel	38%	Achtkarspelen	37%	Loppersum	24%
Winsum	36%	Schiermonnikoog	36%	Zaltbommel	24%

Table 16.2. Top 10 municipalities with the largest share of GKN members

The first striking detail is the overall pattern of decrease in the shares. The municipality with the highest share of GKN members in 1900 came in at 85%, but the highest share dropped to 56% in 1975 and 36% in 2003. The lowest share in the top ten underwent a much less dramatic but still notable decrease from 36% to 24%.

When table 16.1 above is compared to table 16.2, however, it is worth noting that the lists in the latter include none of the large cities. Instead, the highest percentages are found in small rural municipalities. It is no surprise to find Urk and Bunschoten on these lists, given their status as famously Reformed places where other Reformed denominations are also well represented. However, by 1975 Bunschoten disappears from the list altogether, possibly as a result of the *Vrijmaking* there. Instead, the top ten consist almost exclusively of small municipalities in Groningen and Friesland.

### 16.1.4. Urbanisation in the GKN

Next, we can examine the aforementioned hypothesis that the GKN used to have a significant presence in large cities, but have disappeared from there since, and moved to smaller cities and rural areas. Figure 16.4 shows the number of GKN members by degree of urbanisation, as defined by the CBS:



Figure 16.4. The development of the GKN and the degree of urbanisation

This graph underlines the observation that the GKN disappeared from the largest cities. The number of GKN members in the G4 increased until growth suddenly stopped in 1965, and later even turned to decline. This pattern might also reflect people in the big cities leaving the church altogether more often than they did in less urbanised places, but this cannot be verified. Instead, the second largest group, constituted by highly urbanised areas, continued its growth until the peak years of the GKN and then started to decrease. By the later years, slightly urbanised areas make up the largest part of the GKN membership, larger than that in moderately urbanised areas. Rural places come next, but the membership numbers there are still notably higher than in the G4.

The clearest conclusion that we can draw here is that the GKN indeed disappeared from the largest cities, and later on even started to shrink in other large places, giving way to slightly urbanised and moderately urbanised areas. Although the GKN did not have a big presence in rural places, GKN membership was still higher there than in the G4 until around 1964, as reflected in figure 16.5:


Figure 16.5. GKN members in different areas of urbanisation

This figure, with the areas of urbanisation as a percentage of overall GKN membership, once again shows a sharp decrease in the G4, falling from 20% in 1900 to 4% in 2003. The other places remained fairly stable, with 20-24% in highly urbanised areas, 25-23% in moderately urbanised places, and 23-21% in rural places. As we saw, the areas of largest growth are places of slight urbanisation, where the share increased from 24% to 28% between 1900 and 2003, most probably due to the emergence of commuter towns.

# 16.2. The distribution of the growth of the GKN

To show the changes in distribution more clearly, we can map the growth of the GKN between periods. Figure 16.6 shows the differences in growth, with 1973 as the cut-off for the first phase; the green parts of the maps indicate growth, while the yellow, orange, and red fields show different levels of decrease.



Figure 16.6. The geographical distribution of the annual growth in the GKN

Prior to the GKN's peak, large parts of the country showed growth, mostly between 0 and 5%. The strongest growth, ranging between 5 and 10%, occurred in Flevoland, where the Dutch population itself of course also started to increase when parts of it were opened; Urk and the Noordoostpolder already existed, but Dronten was founded in 1970, Lelystad in 1980, and Zeewolde and Almere in 1984. Further growth can be detected along the west coast and in cities spread out evenly in the country. On the other hand, there are also patches where membership numbers were decreasing. These patches are spread evenly throughout the country, however, and therefore do not seem to be systematic. Amsterdam does stand out as one of the first regions to shrink.

In the second period, most growth turned into decline. The sharpest drop occurred in different municipalities throughout the country; there are even municipalities that show a decrease of more than 20%, usually due to the closure of a GKN church in those municipalities. Most of the rest of the country also shows shrinking churches. There are some municipalities, in the western and northern parts of Gelderland and Overijssel, where some growth can still be detected, but growth was mostly limited to those places.

Two additional growth maps can be studied in the context of the history of the GKN. These detail the years when schisms occurred:



Figure 16.7. The growth of the GKN around the schisms

The first map shows the growth in the GKN between 1925 and 1927, the years when Geelkerken and his followers left. However, their departure hardly resulted in a visible decrease, and this is indeed what one would expect, since no more than 5,000 out of a total 550,000 members left the GKN in those years, amounting to a loss of less than 1%. The rift in 1944 was a little more serious, as reflected in the second map of figure 16.7. Here the effect of the *Vrijmaking* is clearly visible, with strong patches of loss around Kampen and in Groningen. These were and remain typical GKv places, as we will see in chapter 18.

To further illustrate the influence of Geelkerken's GKN (hv) denomination, we can map the distribution of its members in 1936:



Figure 16.8. The distribution of the GKN (hv)

Figure 16.8 shows how small the GKN (hv) were in 1936, the middle year of their existence. The largest congregation could be found in Amsterdam-Zuid, which was Geelkerken's own church and had around 2,300 members. Interestingly, the GKN (hv) were mostly clustered in Noord-Holland in the larger Amsterdam area, concentrating around Geelkerken's church. With 600 members, Harkema-Opeinde was the next largest local church, while the 29 members in Arnhem constituted the smallest. Given their small total membership of 5,000, the GKN (hv) denomination did not have much influence on the distribution of the GKN.

# 16.3. Segregation

As we saw in the preceding sections, the GKN had their own specific pattern of distribution in the Netherlands; there were places where most of the inhabitants of a city or town were members of the local GKN church, but also places without any members to speak of. With a view to the pillarisation of Dutch society, it is worth inquiring into the degree of segregation for the denominations studied. Segregation can be defined as the phenomenon when a group of people is not spread homogenously throughout a given space. As such, there is a majority population (i.e., the Dutch population) and a minority population (i.e., the GKN). In practice, this means that there were places whose population consisted mostly of GKN members and very few non-members, but that there were also places where no GKN members could be found at all. The segregation analyses described in chapter 4 are tools for analysing the measure of segregation for the minority group. These tests will show us the extent to which the groups are clustered in their own spaces.

Theoretically, the measures for the GKN should indicate low levels of segregation in the earlier years, up to 1975. During this era, the goal of the GKN was to have churches in as many municipalities as possible, giving every Dutch citizen the chance to attend church. For the later period, when the GKN became more centralised in Friesland, Gelderland, and Overijssel, higher levels of segregation can be expected.

In the following section, two measures of segregation will be calculated and presented. The first is the dissimilarity index, which is a widely used method for measuring segregation. The value ranges from 0 (complete integration) to 1 (complete segregation), and expresses the percentage of the minority population (i.e., the GKN) that would have to change location in order to attain an even distribution of the minority group in the country. Figure 16.9 below shows the development of the dissimilarity index. For the GKN, the index hovers around 0.4, indicating that around 40% of their membership would have to move in order to achieve a homogeneous distribution. This index increases slowly through the years, indicating a slight rise in segregation as membership numbers diminished and GKN members started clustering more. This pattern also calls to mind tables 16.1 and 16.2, with the top ten largest GKN municipalities in 1975 and 2003. In 1975, the number of GKN members seemed to correlate with the number of Dutch people, but in 2003, the GKN members were found living in places with significantly higher numbers of Reformed church members.



Figure 16.9. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the GKN

The next value presented is the exposure index, or interaction index. Like the dissimilarity index, it is an indicator of segregation, but measures it differently. The way to interpret it is different as well; the exposure index measures the chance of interaction between the groups. In other words, the exposure index measures the chance of a GKN member meeting a non-member in his or her own area. The exposure index was at its lowest level in 1944, at 83%. The highest level was reached in 2003, when it stood at nearly 90%. This means that the chance of a GKN member randomly meeting another GKN member was 17% in 1944. By 2003, this percentage had dropped to 10%.

## 16.4. Conclusions

The GKN are a denomination that shows a clear development in geographical distribution over time. From the beginning years until its membership peak in 1974, it had churches everywhere, except for the Catholic south, and had a most prominent presence in Friesland. Densely populated areas also had many GKN members. The largest cities in the Netherlands were also the cities where the largest numbers of GKN members could be found. The only exceptions to this pattern were Noord-Brabant and Limburg; apparently not even the ubiquity of the GKN could penetrate these Catholic regions. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, the distribution of the GKN showed a sudden and sharp change. Members moved from cities to towns and especially to areas with slight urbanisation. On closer inspection, however, the slightly urbanised areas that showed

an increasing number of GKN members typically were places with many Reformed inhabitants anyways. Municipalities like Bunschoten, Kampen, Dronten, and Urk flourished from the 1970s onwards. The GKN seem to have passed through a shift, at first closely following the growth and distribution of the overall Dutch population, but later on reflecting a pattern of growth and distribution more typical for the other, smaller Reformed denominations. This shift finds some reflection in the statistics on segregation, which increased somewhat – although not dramatically so – from the 1970s onwards, when overall membership started to dwindle.

# 17. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

The history and development of CGK membership have already been discussed in detail in chapter 2. The present chapter will now show the geographical distribution and development of the CGK in the Netherlands in detail.

For the CGK, but also for the other small denominations, it is important to keep in mind that there may be many members who attend church in one municipality, but live in another. The continuing fusion of Dutch municipalities only makes this more likely to be case for the later years. Unfortunately, this phenomenon cannot be mapped without microdata, which are not available.

# 17.1. The distribution of members of the CGK in the Netherlands

This section will present maps showing the distribution of CGK members in the Netherlands. We will first look at the entire country, before turning to the distribution at the provincial and municipal levels

## 17.1.1. The national distribution

To begin with, the maps in figure 17.1 show CGK members as a percentage of the overall population early on in this denomination's history (1920), in its peak year of 1985, and, more recently, in 2015:





Figure 17.1. The distribution of the CGK in shares of the Dutch population

Figure 17.1 shows that the distribution of the CGK is spread out quite evenly over the country, in a diagonal band stretching from the south-west to the north. In this respect, the CGK resemble the Bible belt, being fairly well represented in Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, Utrecht, and the western parts of Gelderland and Overijssel. In addition, there are also CGK churches present in the north; the provinces of Drenthe, Friesland, and Groningen all have some members, and several municipalities even have relatively high numbers of CGK members.

Noord-Brabant and Limburg remain for the most part without CGK members. Most of Twente and the Achterhoek are likewise largely devoid of CGK members, with the exception of municipalities like Enschede and Almelo. This pattern can be explained by the high rates of Catholics and liberal *Hervormde* churches, resulting in a general near-absence of Reformed churches there. Noord-Holland is also sparsely populated by CGK members, as is true for most other denominations, as we will see. The municipalities that do have CGK members are generally places where other Reformed denominations can also be found.

### 17.1.2. The distribution over the provinces

Following the distribution of the CGK in the Netherlands, it is interesting to see how the membership is spread out over the provinces. The first way to chart this is to calculate the share of the population of each province that is constituted by CGK members.



Figure 17.2. CGK members as a share of the provincial population

There are two aspects to the graph in figure 17.2 which immediately catch the eye. The first is the unusually high percentage of CGK members in Flevoland, and the second is the low share we see for Limburg and Noord-Brabant. In fact, in Limburg the share of CGK members is consistently at or around zero. However, since most Reformed denominations have low membership numbers in this province, the statistics for the CGK are not altogether unexpected. The same goes for Noord-Brabant, where not even 0.1% of the population are members of a CGK church.

The share of members in Flevoland, on the other hand, is remarkably high. This is mostly due to Urk, which, as later parts of this chapter will show, has extremely high absolute and relative numbers of CGK members. In 1985, Urk was annexed to Flevoland when it was opened as a province. Before then, it had been a part of Overijssel, and, until 1950, belonged to Noord-Holland. The Noordoostpolder also existed before Flevoland did, and was a part of Overijssel until 1985. These circumstances are also reflected in the other numbers; the share of CGK members in Overijssel dropped from 0.91% in 1984 to 0.58% in 1985, due to the provincial reassignment of the municipalities of Urk and the Noordoostpolder.

The remaining provinces all show patterns that are similar to each other. There was a strong increase between 1920 and 1985, when the CGK denomination as a whole was growing. This growth apparently took place everywhere. Between 1985 and 2015, however, the shares decreased again. These new values did not fall below the level of 1920 and probably will not do so in the foreseeable future, either, but the change is still notable. The only exception to the pattern is Groningen; the number of CGK members there increased somewhat between 1985 and 2015 from 4965 to 5260 members. The Dutch population, on the other hand, did not grow in Groningen, showing a difference in development between the CGK population and the general Dutch population in the province, leading to higher shares of CGK members as a part of the overall population.



Figure 17.3. The distribution of CGK members by province

Figure 17.3 shows the percentage of members as part of the entire CGK population living in each province, so this is solely the distribution within the denomination over the Netherlands. The resulting graph shows that the percentage of CGK members living in Groningen actually underwent a marked drop, from 13% to 7%, which makes the findings above concerning the increasing percentage of CGK members in the overall Groningen population even more interesting. The decline in the share of the Dutch population living in Groningen, which dropped from 5.5% in 1920 to 3.5% in 2015, surpassed the decline of the CGK population, allowing for the growth of the CGK relative to the Dutch population.

Apart from Groningen, also Drenthe shows a marked decrease in its share of the CGK population, dropping from around 7% to 4%. Flevoland obviously represents a place of strong growth, entering the graph as a serious presence in 1985 and showing a powerful increase, from 1% before the opening of the province when the Noordoostpolder alone existed, to 11% after 1985. Most of the

other provinces stayed stable, although the developments in Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland are worth noting. First, Zuid-Holland consistently maintained the highest percentage of CGK members over time, with a long period with percentages as high as 30%, increasing from 1920 to 1930 and staying near 30% until around 1980. After that, the percentage of the share dropped to 25%, and around 2015 it fell to 20%. Noord-Holland went through a similar development, first growing to around 17% until 1950, and then falling again to 10% in 1980 and 7% in 2015. The CGK seem to have joined the suburbanisation process of the Netherlands, with members moving to more rural areas. Paragraph 17.1.4. will discuss this issue in further detail.

## 17.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

Before we do so, however, we first need to examine the distribution of the CGK at the lower, municipal level. This section will present the municipalities that have the most CGK members. Again, the statistics can be presented in two ways. The first table shows the ten municipalities with the highest absolute CGK membership:

1920	1985		2015		
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Dordrecht	750	Veenendaal	3,147	Urk	6,877
Utrecht	600	Urk	3,138	Zwolle	3,527
Enschede	600	Sliedrecht	2,262	Veenendaal	3,248
Hoogeveen	576	Rotterdam	2,189	Groningen	2,358
Sliedrecht	504	Hoogeveen	2,104	Hoogeveen	1,951
Grootegast	500	Bunschoten	2,004	Bunschoten	1,833
Zwolle	465	Dantumadeel	1,821	Nunspeet	1,762
Apeldoorn	460	Schouwen-Duiveland	1,579	Sliedrecht	1,756
Harderwijk	405	Nunspeet	1,555	Dordrecht	1,529
Groningen	403	Apeldoorn	1,539	Dantumadeel	1,314

Table 17.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest number of CGK members

In 1920, most of the municipalities on the list were small to medium-sized cities, like Dordrecht, Hoogeveen, Zwolle, and Apeldoorn. Utrecht, Groningen, and Enschede were large cities. By 1985, however, these large cities had disappeared. At this time, the municipalities with the largest membership numbers were mostly found in rural areas or small cities. Most of them were situated in the Bible belt and had churches from multiple Reformed denominations. Rotterdam is, of course, a larger city, but also one that is typical for the Bible belt. The other interesting exception is Dantumadeel, a municipality in Friesland and the only place in the north of the country that appears on the list for this year. Dantumadeel in fact had four congregations that year, in Veenwouden, Broeksterwoude, Zwaagwesteinde, and Damwoude. Together, these churches had 1821 members, explaining this municipality's presence on the list.

In 2015, the overall image once again changed somewhat, as the list still included mostly small to medium-sized cities in the Bible belt, as well as Dantumadeel. Another addition is Groningen, which had been absent from the 1985 list after occupying the final place in 1920. The CGK actually had only one church in the city of Groningen, but since it was a very large one, it put Groningen on the 2015 list all by itself.

Another place of note appearing in 2015 is Urk. As earlier information showed, Urk had high numbers of CGK members. Although Urk was not yet on the list in 1920, it stormed to second place in 1985, and rose to first place in 2015. Urk has an interesting history in the CGK; in 1962, 500 out of 800 members left a local CGK church in Urk to follow their new minister who had been let go by the denomination and joined the OGG, but the growth of the remaining CGK community did not stop, so that it had 1660 members by 2015. In 1976, a GKN church joined the CGK in two parts, boosting membership by 1,350 members that year. By 2015, Urk had a total of almost 7,000 members, making it the place with the highest CGK numbers in the Netherlands.

Another way of examining this information is by shares. Table 16.2 presents the shares of the total CGK membership formed by the municipalities with the ten highest percentages:

1920		1985		2015	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Bunschoten	7%	Urk	28%	Urk	35%
Grootegast	6%	Bunschoten	11%	Bunschoten	9%
Oud-Beijerland	6%	Sliedrecht	10%	Sliedrecht	7%
Harderwijk	5%	Dantumadeel	10%	Dantumadeel	7%
Wijdemeren	5%	Veenendaal	7%	Renswoude	7%
Veenendaal	4%	Nunspeet	7%	Nunspeet	7%
Urk	4%	Grootegast	6%	Veenendaal	5%
Boskoop	4%	Barendrecht	6%	Ouderkerk	5%
Barendrecht	4%	Schouwen-Duiveland	5%	Woudenberg	5%
Sliedrecht	4%	Hoogeveen	4%	Zederik	4%

Table 17.2. Top ten municipalities with the largest share of CGK members

The difference between the relative and the absolute numbers here is quite interesting. While the top ten in absolute numbers still included some large cities and a fair number of medium-sized and small cities, these cities are altogether absent from the lists showing the highest relative numbers. By 2015, all that is left are rural, small municipalities in the Bible belt. This apparently is where the CGK had the strongest relative presence. In addition, a few municipalities in the north of the Netherlands also appear on the lists in table 17.2; Dantumadeel appears again in 1985 and 2015, and Grootegast in 1920 and 1985, the latter with two fairly large churches in Lutjegast and Kornhorn.

### 17.1.4. Urbanisation in the CGK

As the previous sections have shown, the CGK denomination is one that emphasises its presence in large cities. Zuid-Holland and Noord-Holland are provinces showing the most visible decrease in CGK membership, and it is mostly rural areas that appear on the lists of top-ten municipalities. This leads to the assumption that the CGK has stronger presence in less urbanised areas, which can be illustrated with the figure below:



Figure 17.4. The development of the CGK and degree of urbanisation

One surprising feature on this graph is that it clearly shows the CGK to have been consistently biggest in highly urbanised areas rather than the G4, and to have passed through their most typical development there. The G4 already started showing decline in the 1950s, when CGK members suddenly began leaving these cities. Conversely, places of moderate urbanisation still showed continued growth in 2015, and even received a growth impulse in 1974, elevating it above slightly urbanised areas. Rural areas increased somewhat as well. Starting out with the fewest CGK members, by 1972 these places had virtually the same number of CGK members as the G4, but when the four largest Dutch cities start to decline and rural areas continued to grow, CGK membership in rural places permanently surpassed the levels of the G4.



Figure 17.5. CGK members in different areas of urbanisation

These observations are also reflected when the percentages of CGK members in different areas of urbanisation are compared. At their peak, the G4 contained 12% of all CGK members, but this dropped to 5% in 2015. Highly urbanised areas consistently made up the largest part of the CGK, with up to 44% of the total membership in the early 1930s, although this share dropped to 38% during the war and again to 35% in the 1970s, giving rise to growth in moderately urbanised areas, whose share grew from 17% in World War II to 27% in 2015. Slightly urbanised areas stayed stable at around 18%, as did rural places with 10%.

# 17.2. The distribution of the growth of the CGK

The previous sections mapped the growth of the CGK. Now it is time to describe the distribution of that growth, as in figure 17.6:



Figure 17.6. The growth of the CGK between their early years and the peak in 1985, and the peak and recent years

This figure shows how much and where the CGK grew between the beginning of data collection, their peak in 1985, and later years. The very first aspect to stand out is the difference in growth for the two periods. Prior to the peak, growth is almost ubiquitous. All municipalities with CGK members show an increase. This recalls the development of the membership numbers presented in chapter 7, which showed extreme growth until 1985. These statistics are underlined by the above map. The strongest growth in this first period was found in Apeldoorn, Ede, and Nunspeet, which arguably represent some of the most typical Bible belt municipalities. Growth also occurred in municipalities like Amsterdam, Hilversum, and The Hague, which is surprising as most denominations show decline in the Randstad. In the north, however, there were also many municipalities with an increasing CGK membership, especially Leeuwarden, Dantumadeel, and Achtkarspelen, showing that the CGK indeed had a strong presence in Friesland. The only two exceptions to the growth in this period were the municipalities of Voorst and Dalfsen. Voorst had one congregation, in Teuge, which closed in 1968. The closure of this congregation is worth noting, since it was one of the three original local CGK churches. The second municipality that shows a decrease is Dalfsen; this reflects the fate of the church in Nieuwleusen, which closed in 1952 with 23 members, causing a seemingly dramatic decline of 100%, although it did not actually involve many members leaving the denomination.

After the peak of 1985, however, the growth pattern completely changed. There were still municipalities showing growth, but the really strong growth seen in Eemsmond and Zeewolde, for example, were caused by the establishment of new congregations in Kantens and in Zeewolde itself, inciting CGK members to move there from other municipalities or to travel to these new churches. Municipalities showing a more natural pattern of growth were Groningen, Zwolle, Ede, and the remainder of Flevoland. For the rest, the CGK experienced negative growth in most municipalities. The churches in Klundert, Valthermond, and Heerenveen, which were the only ones in their respective municipalities, closed their doors, while other places simply had to deal with shrinking congregations. The variations in growth and decrease seem to be quite random, leaving it unclear why some municipalities were shrinking and others not.

# 17.3. Segregation

There are two further statistics to present, relating to the segregation of the CGK – that is, the extent to which they cluster together and are distributed over the country. Figure 17.7 presents two indices. The first is the dissimilarity index, indicating the number of people in the CGK who would have to change location in order to obtain a homogeneous distribution of members:



Table 17.7. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the CGK

The graph shows a rapid decline in the value of the dissimilarity index until roughly 1944, which can be explained by the extremely steep growth during the early years after the CGK started collecting data. At the beginning, almost 90% of the denomination would have had to change location in order to achieve an

even distribution, but this number later dropped to around 55%. This shows that the CGK did not actually cluster very much, although their segregation did increase again after 1985, finally landing somewhere around 62%.

The second index is the exposure index, which shows the chance of a member of the group (i.e., the CGK) meeting a non-member in his or her neighbourhood. Clearly, the chance of meeting a non-CGK member decreased somewhat as the denomination grew. However, the difference between 1919 and 2015 is so small that it is almost negligent.

### 17.4. Conclusions

This chapter mapped and charted the geographic distribution of the CGK. As a supplement to the chapter on the historical development of the denomination's membership, it has given some extra insights into its history and development.

This chapter has shown that the distribution of the CGK membership changed somewhat over the years. In the period ending with the CGK's membership peak, the geographical distribution spread out across the Netherlands. As the CGK started with only three local churches, one of which has closed since, they became more homogeneously distributed in the Netherlands during their growth. This period of growth also shows a marked decrease in segregation, as reflected in the dissimilarity index. After the peak, the CGK shrank again, but remained strong in most of the denomination's core municipalities. By far the largest CGK municipality is Urk, which could boast of 35% CGK membership in 2015. Bunschoten, Sliedrecht, and Veenendaal are also typical CGK places, although the numbers there are not as high as they are for Urk.

One interesting aspect of the distribution of the CGK is that it shows characteristics of both experientialist and orthodox churches. The CGK are present in the Bible belt, with churches in Zeeland, a large part of the CGK population in Zuid-Holland, and areas densely populated by CGK members in the Veluwe, and large communities in Apeldoorn, Ede, and Nunspeet. On the other hand, the CGK also had congregations in the northern parts of the Netherlands: Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe. This northern presence is very unusual for experientialist churches, but not unusual for orthodox churches. The CGK denomination's character as a wider spectrum of experientialism and orthodoxy, as noted in chapter 2, therefore also shows in its geographical distribution.

# 18. Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt

The history and temporal development of the GKv have been described in detail in parts I and II of this study. The purpose of the present chapter is to show where GKv members live and how their distribution changed through the years. I will first discuss this on the national level, then explore the division over the provinces, and, finally, offer some information at the municipal level. The chapter will end with a discussion of the degree of urbanisation, distribution of growth, and segregation.

## 18.1. The distribution of GKv members in the Netherlands

### 18.1.1. The national distribution

Figure 18.1 presents the distribution of the GKv in the Netherlands at the beginning of their history and more recently in 2015, showing GKv members as a percentage of the local Dutch population.



Figure 18.1. The distribution of the GKv in shares of the Dutch population

Figure 18.1 shows that the GKv to be best represented in Overijssel, Groningen, and Friesland. The north of Overijssel in particular shows high membership numbers. Flevoland, however, and parts of the west of Gelderland also show clearly on the map. These are the main areas with GKv concentrations. The denomination does have members in other places, like parts of Zuid-Holland and Zeeland, but the shares there are generally lower. In the first period shown,

there were GKv members in Noord-Holland, but by 2015 they had all but disappeared. Also worth noting is that Groningen, Zwolle, Amersfoort, and Rotterdam had relatively high numbers of GKv members in both periods, indicating a strong, intertwined relationship between the movement of GKv members and the location of GKv middle schools. The relationship between school and church will be examined in further detail in chapter 29, in part IV, but it is interesting to note that a certain relationship is already visible here.

In both periods detailed above, the GKv were mostly absent in Noord-Brabant and Limburg. There were a few municipalities in Brabant that had GKv churches, but they only show up as light spots on the maps. Twente and the Achterhoek are also partly empty, although we do see several municipalities with large local GKv communities, like Enschede, Almelo, and Hengelo. Noord-Holland shows very low shares of GKv members, especially in 2015, as is true for the GKN and CGK as described in the preceding chapters.

#### *18.1.2. The distribution over the provinces*

The previous data have been compiled further to reflect the share of GKv members per province, and will again be presented in two ways: the GKv as a share of the Dutch population, and the distribution of GKv members over the provinces as a share of the denomination's own membership. Figure 18.2 shows the percentage of each province's population constituted by GKv members.



Figure 18.2. The share of GKv members per province

Confirming the image emerging from the maps in figure 18.1, Overijssel and Groningen show the highest shares of GKv members, followed by Drenthe,

Utrecht, Friesland, and Zeeland. Flevoland does also have numbers over 1%, but Gelderland lagged far behind, together with Limburg and Noord-Brabant. The low percentage of GKv members in Gelderland is interesting, as most other Reformed denominations are very well represented there. The GKv thus seem to be a denomination concentrated in Overijssel and the northern provinces. Like the GKN, they have high numbers in Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe, but, surprisingly, GKv members are mostly absent from more typical Bible belt provinces like Zuid-Holland and Zeeland. Unlike the GKN, however, the GKv show a much stronger presence in Groningen than in Friesland, due to the local history there in the *Afscheiding*, *Doleantie*, and *Vrijmaking*.

Figure 18.2 also allows us to see the development of the shares. Most provinces show a decreasing percentage of GKv members, including the typically GKv provinces of Groningen and Overijssel. In fact, Gelderland, Friesland, and Drenthe were the only ones to experience (small) growth. The Dutch population in most of these places was shrinking; thus, if the absolute number of GKv members stayed steady, their relative number will naturally have increased.

Secondly, provincial distribution can be presented as a part of the total GKv population. Figure 18.3 shows the percentages of GKv members living in each province:



Figure 18.3. The distribution of GKv members over the provinces

Once more confirming what earlier figures have shown, this graph indicates that most of the GKv members lived in Groningen and Overijssel during the period studied. However, the numbers for Groningen do show a very clearly decline, from 26% to 16%. Overijssel stayed steady and even grew somewhat from 22% to 23%. Drenthe and Gelderland's shares also increased, from 4% to 7% and from 5% to 10%, respectively. Friesland showed some initial growth, but it soon dropped back down to its early level. Noord-Brabant, Limburg, and Flevoland made up only very small parts of the GKv. Zuid-Holland started out quite strong at 19%, but had shrunk to 13% by 2015. The share for Noord-Holland was suddenly cut in half from 7% to 3.5% in 1967, indicating that most of the GKv churches in the province joined the NGK at the schism. After that, Noord-Holland remained sparsely populated with GKv members.

1950		2003		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Groningen	9,359	Hardenberg	7,709	Hardenberg	7,426
Enschede	4,717	Bunschoten	6,295	Bunschoten	6,099
Kampen	4,403	Groningen	4,801	Zwolle	5,910
Rotterdam	4,025	Zwolle	4,701	Amersfoort	4,689
Bunschoten	3,718	Amersfoort	4,510	Assen	4,302
Hardenberg	3,152	Assen	3,709	Groningen	3,613
Terneuzen	2,477	Enschede	3,007	Enschede	2,471
Zwolle	2,467	Rotterdam	2,969	Rotterdam	2,353
De Marne	1,911	Dalfsen	2,204	Dalfsen	2,181
The Hague	1.904	Terneuzen	2.073	Smallingerland	1.839

#### *18.1.3. The distribution over municipalities*

The final results on distribution can be explained by looking at the top ten most densely GKv-populated municipalities in the Netherlands at the beginning of their history, at their peak, and in recent years.

Table 18.1. Top 10 municipalities with the highest number of GKv members

The highest numbers of members seem to have been located in medium-sized to large cities in the early phase of GKv history; Groningen, Enschede, Zwolle, Rotterdam, and The Hague are all represented on the list. Kampen also appears on the list for 1950, but does not show up on the later lists. This reflects how the *Vrijmaking* started in Kampen, while after the 1967 secession most GKv churches joined the NGK. Bunschoten and Hardenberg can also be found on the first list, as typical Reformed places, interestingly joined by Terneuzen in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. As has been noted, the province of Zeeland did not have

many GKv members, but the municipality of Terneuzen somehow did, comprising the local churches of Axel, Hoek, Terneuzen, and Zaamslag. Most of these congregations were also fairly large. Together, they formed a notable group of GKv members in the area.

By the GKv's peak, Hardenberg and Bunschoten rose to take the top two places. Hardenberg is a typically orthodox Reformed place, with large GKN, CGK, and GKv populations. The same goes for Bunschoten, where a number of NGK members could also be found. These two municipalities were followed by Zwolle, Groningen, Amersfoort, Assen, Enschede, and Rotterdam, all mediumsized to large cities with four or more local GKv churches each, as well as GKv educational facilities. The remaining places on this middle list were taken by Dalfsen, which also had a number of GKN members but is most typically a GKv municipality, followed by Terneuzen.

The list for 2015 remained largely unchanged, except that the absolute membership numbers for each municipality decreased, and that Terneuzen has been replaced by Smallingerland. The latter municipality includes Drachten, which had three fairly large local GKv churches in 2015.

1950		2003		2015	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Bunschoten	53%	Bunschoten	32%	Bunschoten	30%
Hattem	20%	Menterwolde	15%	Menterwolde	13%
Kampen	14%	Hardenberg	13%	Hardenberg	12%
Leek	13%	Bedum	12%	Hattem	11%
Bedum	13%	Hattem	12%	Winsum	10%
Slochteren	10%	Ten Boer	12%	Ten Boer	10%
Ten Boer	10%	Zuidhorn	11%	Bedum	9%
Zuidhorn	9%	Eemsmond	9%	Zuidhorn	9%
Oldebroek	8%	Winsum	9%	Eemsmond	9%
De Marne	8%	Dalfsen	8%	Staphorst	8%

The second way to show the GKv presence in the municipalities is the percentage of each municipality made up of GKv members:

Table 18.2. Top ten municipalities with the highest share of GKv members

Table 18.2 shows significant differences vis-à-vis the previous figures, except in that the top spot is once again solidly occupied by Bunschoten. Although the percentages for Bunschoten do decrease over the years, it still retained an unusually high share of GKv members. As with table 18.1, Kampen does appear on the list for 1950, but is absent from the later ones. Hardenberg and Dalfsen likewise figure on the earlier table, but Dalfsen disappears in 2015. Hardenberg, however, remains. Hattem and Oldebroek are also notable places on the lists in table 18.2. These two municipalities are right next to each other in Gelderland,

in the heart of the GKv concentration around Zwolle. Oldebroek, however, only appears on the list for 1950, with one large church in Wezep. In 2015, Staphorst also shows up on the list, a small municipality in Overijssel that is renowned for its conservative character and has a small church in Staphorst itself and a large one in Rouveen. Staphorst has a local HHK church numbering over 5,000 members, and used to be a *Hervormd* bulwark prior to the establishment of the HHK. All the other places appearing on the 2015 list that have not yet been discussed are small places of slight urbanisation in Groningen, with between 7,000 and 18,000 inhabitants. It seems, then, that the largest relative numbers of GKv members live in moderately or slightly urbanised areas. The next paragraph will look at this in further detail.

### 18.1.4. Urbanisation in the GKv

From the preceding sections, it emerged that the GKv seem to have been most prevalent in small to medium-sized cities. However, it is also worth examining how the GKv developed with different degrees of urbanisation.



Figure 18.4. The development of the GKv and the degrees of urbanisation

As it turns out, the GKv were indeed almost entirely absent from the G4 (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht). The membership there dropped to even lower levels with the schism of 1967, when a number of members left for the NGK. Instead, most GKv members can be found in large and small cities, with the largest numbers in highly urbanised areas, albeit closely followed by growing numbers in slightly urbanised places. Members living in moderately urbanised areas come next, and then the rural areas, whose number is small but still higher than that for the G4. It is worth noting that the slightly and moderately urbanised places closely follow the temporal development typical of the GKv as presented in chapter 8. The other areas seem to develop more or less independently of this pattern.

Figure 18.5 shows the urbanisation in the GKv as proportions of the denomination's total population:



Figure 18.5. GKv members over different areas of urbanisation

In the beginning, only 10% of the GKv lived in the G4, a number that only went on to drop to 4% by 1985. Almost a third of all GKv members lived in highly urbanised municipalities, like Zwolle, Amersfoort, Groningen, and Enschede. Moderately and slightly urbanised areas both saw increases from 20% around 1950 to, respectively, 24% and 25% in 2015. Even rural areas made up 15% of the total GKv population, indicating that the GKv were better represented in less urbanised areas than the overall Dutch population was.

# 18.2. The distribution of the growth of the GKv

Looking closer at the growth and decline of the GKv, we can divide their history into two segments: before the peak in 2003 and after the peak. For further exploration, it is helpful to show where exactly the highest levels of increase and decrease occurred, as in figure 18.6 below.



Figure 18.6. The geographical distribution of the growth of the GKv, before and after their peak

The areas with the largest growth in the first sixty years of GKV existence can be found in Flevoland and the lower Veluwe, around Ede, Barneveld, and Apeldoorn, all municipalities well-known for the large numbers of Reformed people living there. There are also several areas near the border between Groningen and Friesland that did very well. The West of Friesland and the northern tip of Noord-Holland also showed considerable growth. Maastricht is likewise interesting; the first map shows the GKv congregation there shrinking, resulting in its closure in 1967, when most members joined the newly established NGK. The growth reflected on the second map is caused by the establishment of a new GKv there in 2006, which then joined the NGK, resulting in an NGKv congregation.

For the period after 2003, however, the pattern for most areas is one of decrease. The municipalities that experienced the sharpest decline were De Bilt and Doetinchem, with a drop of 45-50%. The decrease in De Bilt can be explained by the GKv De Bilt-Bilthoven merging with the GKv Zeist, in a different municipality. The only GKv in Doetinchem was the GKv Doetinchem, whose numbers dwindled until the congregation finally disbanded in 2011 with 68 members.

The only exceptions to the pattern of decline were Woerden and De Ronde Venen. The strong growth in De Ronde Venen is probably to be accounted for by the revitalisation project that was successfully run in Mijdrecht. The congregation there was about to close, but a new minister was hired in 2003, after which it started flourishing (GKv, 2011). The growth in Woerden can be ascribed to the foundation of the GKv Woerden in 2010.

Finally, there is some information of interest relating to growth around the time of the NGK schism in 1967. In an earlier chapter, we already saw that GKv growth was stunted in those years. Figure 18.7 below shows where membership declined most prominently.



Figure 18.7. The distribution of the growth in the GKv at the time of the schism

As has been noted, the GKv underwent a significant in membership in Noord-Holland. While the area around Amsterdam was once populated by GKv members, many of them left for the NGK. The schism also seems to have hit very hard in Kampen and surrounding municipalities, including large parts of Flevoland, as well as the area of Apeldoorn and Ede. The several churches in Zuid-Holland, Noord-Brabant, and Zeeland also shrank, with the exception of the GKv municipality of Terneuzen. Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland seem to have suffered the least in the wake of the schism, since roughly half of the municipalities there continued to grow as normal. The remaining municipalities did decrease, but not as much as the aforementioned places.

# 18.3. Segregation

Having discussed the distribution of the GKv, we now turn to their segregation as a group within the majority population of the Netherlands. The two values used to measure this are the dissimilarity index and the exposure index. The dissimilarity index, presented in graph 18.8, shows a high initial value; 66% of the GKv would have had to change location so as to attain a homogeneous distribution in the Netherlands. As they grew, however, this percentage dropped to a little over 56% in the late 1960s, but seemed to hover around 62% in the years since, with a slight decline.



Figure 18.8. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the GKv

The exposure index shows the chance of a member of a group – in this case, the GKv – meeting a non-member in their own neighbourhood. For the GKv, this value has remained stable at around 0.95, indicating a 95% chance. Considering that the GKv represent only 0.7% of the overall Dutch population, this statistic is not entirely unexpected.

# 18.4. Conclusions

In summary, it can be concluded that the GKv are very much concentrated in Groningen, northwest Overijssel, and northwest Gelderland. Friesland and Drenthe also include a fair number of GKv churches. The figures showed very

few GKv members in the southern part of the Netherlands, except for the municipality of Terneuzen in the south of Zeeland. Overall, GKv members seemed to favour small and large cities over the G4 and rural areas. Clearly, the GKv are not and never have a Randstad denomination. The strong GKv clustering reflected on the maps is also supported by the segregation measures. Both the dissimilarity index and the expose index show a fairly segregated group, more segregated, in fact, than the GKN and CGK.

The largest change in GKv distribution is the nearly total loss of members in Noord-Holland. This can partly be ascribed to the 1967 schism; the NGK gained quite some members in Amsterdam and surrounding areas, where the GKv are simply all but absent. Amsterdam is also one of the main examples of secularisation. Since Amsterdam is a large and worldly city, it is difficult to maintain churches there, a pattern reflected by the diminishing membership of other denominations as well. In addition, any GKv members who did live in Amsterdam joined the Dutch migration to Almere or moved to Amersfoort to live closer to a Reformed middle school once their children reached adolescence. The middle section of Noord-Holland simply has very few Reformed churches, explaining the absence of GKv churches there. The same goes for Noord-Brabant and Limburg.

# 19. Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

The *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* (NGK) are one of the smallest and most recent denominations in the dataset. This chapter will discuss the NGK in further detail, with special attention to their geographical distribution.

# 19.1. The distribution of the NGK in the Netherlands

### 19.1.1. The national distribution

The maps below show where NGK congregations were situated as a percentage of the local Dutch population in 1970, when the denomination published its first yearbook, and in 2015, the final year of data collection.



Figure 19.1. The distribution of the NGK in shares of the Dutch population

The first map shows that the NGK had the largest presence in the northern part of Flevoland, the west of Overijssel, and some parts of Gelderland, and a bit in Amsterdam. Places with an NGK presence outside these areas were few and far between. There were a number of congregations in Noord-Brabant, namely in Rijsbergen (in the municipality Zundert), Breda, Werkendam, and Eindhoven. A small number of churches were located in the east of Gelderland and in Groningen and Haren, the Tehuisgemeente in Groningen being the congregation where some of the 1967 conflict started.

By 2015, the distribution had changed somewhat. The map clearly shows that the NGK as a whole had grown and that the members had spread out a little

more. Flevoland in particular had come to be well populated by NGK members, and also the west of Gelderland seems to show growth. Moreover, the NGK moved somewhat to the eastern parts of Gelderland and Overijssel, with Enschede as another place with a high NGK population. Very small numbers could be found around Utrecht, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, while the numbers in Amsterdam had dropped from their 1970 level. Several new churches had opened in the north of the Netherlands, but these were very few in number: Assen, Hoogeveen, Heervenveen, Wolvega, Groningen, Haren, and Ten Post. Only a few churches were left in the south in 2015, among them Eindhoven and Rijsbergen (in the municipality Zundert).

### 19.1.2. The distribution over the provinces

Having discussed the general distribution of NGK members in the Netherlands, we will now look more closely at their distribution in and over the provinces. The information will be presented in two ways, the first being the percentage of NGK members in the population of each province:



Figure 19.2. The share of NGK members per province

This figure confirms what we already saw on the maps in figure 19.1; the NGK were largely concentrated in Overijssel, Gelderland, Flevoland, and, a little more clearly here, Utrecht. Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and Zeeland all show nearly negligible percentages of NGK members. It has to be noted, however, that the percentages are very low across the board; all of them are under 1% of the total population. The highest percentage could be found in Overijssel in 1970, with 0.8%, which nevertheless dropped sharply by

2015, to just over 0.4%. Noord-Holland also shows a significant decrease in NGK members, probably due to losses in the Amsterdam region. Zuid-Holland stayed quite stable. The real growth of the NGK took place in Gelderland and Utrecht. In contrast to the other denominations, the places of NGK growth are readily recognised. Both Gelderland and Utrecht had several churches that grew significantly over the years. In Gelderland, there had been 24 NGK congregations in 1971. While eight of them were closed by 2015, the remaining churches – with a single exception— were all growing; Ede, Wageningen, and Voorthuizen all increased by around 400%.

In Utrecht, the growth churches are in Houten, which expanded from 164 members in 1988 to 1,743 in 2015, and in Bunschoten, which went from 1,100 members in 1970 to 1,847 in 2015. Most other NGK churches in Utrecht were likewise doing well. The province had thirteen NGK churches in total over the years, two of which had closed by 2015. The others either grew or remained stable.

The next measure for examining the distribution of NGK membership is its division by province:



Figure 19.3. The distribution of NGK members over the provinces

This graph confirms details noted earlier. The provinces with the most NGK members were Overijssel, Gelderland, and Noord-Holland. However, Overijssel and Zuid-Holland showed decline over the years. Overijssel started with almost 30% of the NGK population, but dropped to 15% by 2015. This underlines what

the maps in figure 19.1 showed, namely that the NGK members spread out. Having started in Kampen, members left Overijssel and moved on to other places. Noord-Holland also shows a sharp decrease as a portion of the NGK community, dropping from 18% to 7%. Zuid-Holland stayed stable around 18%. On the other hand, Utrecht's share increased from 10% to 21% between 1970 and 2015, while Gelderland went from 17% to 25%. The smallest proportion of NGK members were living in the north of the Netherlands, with Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe all coming in around 1.5%, and in the south, where Noord-Brabant had 2.75% of all NGK members and Zeeland and Limburg had close to zero. This graph also seems to show more variation over time than the same graphs for other denominations do, indicating that NGK members tended to move around more.

### 19.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

The next statistic of note is the NGK distribution by municipality. Some local churches have already been identified as the catalysts of NGK growth. The following tables showing the largest numbers and shares of NGK members in the Dutch municipalities will shed more light on this. The first table shows the ten municipalities with the highest absolute number of NGK members.

1970		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Kampen	3,713	Kampen	2,567
Zwolle	1,344	Bunschoten	1,847
Oldebroek	1,208	Houten	1,743
Bunschoten	1,100	Ede	1,522
Zaanstad	809	Oldebroek	1,220
Schiedam	808	Apeldoorn	983
Heerde	785	Amersfoort	897
Amsterdam	770	Barneveld	882
Haarlemmermeer	724	Enschede	847
Utrecht	570	Zwolle	794

Table 19.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest numbers of NGK members

In 1970, the largest two NGK municipalities were found in Overijssel (Kampen, Zwolle), where the schism started. Oldebroek, with a church in Wezep, and Heerde are both municipalities in Gelderland. The large NGK presence in Bunschoten is perhaps unsurprising, since there are also large GKv congregations there. Zaanstad, Haarlemmermeer, and Amsterdam likewise appear in the list of largest NGK municipalities in 1970, further exemplifying the concentration

of NGK members around Amsterdam at that time. Schiedam, close to Rotterdam, appears on the list, but Rotterdam itself does not. The city of Utrecht does appear, however, confirming the slight concentrations around Utrecht, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam reflected by the maps earlier in this chapter.

By 2015, Kampen was still the municipality with the largest number of NGK members. Zwolle dropped from second place to tenth, but still appears on the list. Enschede, which is also located in Overijssel, takes ninth place. The provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht are best represented. In Gelderland, the municipalities of Oldebroek, Ede, Apeldoorn, and Barneveld all have a large NGK presence. As the previous sections already indicated, the churches in Ede, Voorthuizen (a place in the municipality of Barneveld), and Enschede indeed experienced immense growth between 1970 and 2015. In the province of Utrecht, the largest NGK communities of 2015 were found in Bunschoten, Houten, and Amersfoort, corroborating the strong growth in Bunschoten and Houten already indicated above.

1970		2015	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Kampen	9%	Bunschoten	9%
Bunschoten	9%	Liesveld	7%
Liesveld	7%	Oldebroek	5%
Oldebroek	6%	Kampen	5%
Heerde	5%	Heerde	4%
Urk	4%	Houten	4%
Wormerland	4%	Hattem	3%
Barendrecht	2%	Zeewolde	3%
Oostzaan	2%	Oegstgeest	2%
Zwolle	2%	Urk	2%

A different way of looking at this information is to examine the municipalities with the highest relative number of NGK members, as presented below:

Table 19.2. Top 10 municipalities with the largest share of NGK members

This list differs from the earlier one in several important respects. While Kampen, Bunschoten, Oldebroek, Heerde, and Zwolle also appeared on the list with highest absolute numbers for 1970, the other names are new. Liesveld is on the list as a small municipality with a single, fairly large church in Langerak. Urk had one medium-sized NGK, as did Wormerland in Wormer, and Barendrecht. The municipality of Oostzaan had a small church, but is itself also small. The situation for Zwolle is different, as it had one large church of around 1,300 members, which split in 1984 due to conflict. The congregation's original growth did not continue at the same level, and by 2015 the two congregations resulting from the split had around 800 members combined. This also explains

why Zwolle no longer appears on the list for 2015. Wormerland, Barendrecht, and Oostzaan also disappear from the list in 2015, showing that the relatively high number of NGK members there was not a long-lasting phenomenon. On the other hand, the later list does show municipalities which are known to have experienced significant growth over the years, like Bunschoten and Houten. Oldebroek, Kampen, Heerde, and Urk also appeared on the above list with absolute membership numbers, showing that they were indeed municipalities with a solid NGK presence. Hattem, Zeewolde, and Oegstgeest are all churches that grew powerfully between the time of their establishment and 2015, with the numbers for Hattem and Oegstgeest having grown by a factor of three, from 150 to 450 and from 200 to 600, respectively. Zeewolde was founded in 1986 with 22 members, but by 2015 had grown to no less than 561 members.

It is interesting to note that the places on the lists detailing relative membership numbers are not highly urbanised. Zwolle is the largest city among them, and it does not return in 2015, showing that the percentage of NGK members was not all that exceptionally high, among other reasons because the Dutch population grew significantly in Zwolle between 1970 and 2015. The relationship between urbanisation and NGK size will be explored further below.

#### 19.1.4. Urbanisation in the NGK

The degree of urbanisation and the size of the NGK is shown here in figure 19.4:



Figure 19.4. The development of the NGK and the degree of urbanisation

This graph shows clearly that the NGK have always had a very low presence in rural areas and in the G4. Large cities and moderately urbanised places have similarly high NGK numbers, with slightly urbanised areas coming somewhere in-between them and the two areas of urbanisation on the lower end of the spectrum. Within the NGK as a denomination, the distribution over different areas of urbanisation is as follows:



Figure 19.5. NGK members in different areas of urbanisation

This figure shows that the largest percentage of the NGK membership, amounting to over a third, was to be living in large cities, while only 6% of members lived in the G4 and no more than 4% came from rural areas. Another third lived in moderately urbanised areas, leaving 22% in the slightly urbanised areas. Together, these statistics confirm that NGK churches were indeed most prevalent in large and small cities during the period studied.

# 19.2. The distribution of the growth of the NGK

Having described the geographic distribution of the NGK in detail, we do well also to investigate where their growth occurred. This is shown on the map in figure 19.6.


Figure 19.6. The geographical distribution of the growth in the NGK 1970-2015

In this figure, the growth has been taken for the entire period of the NGK's existence up to 2015, instead of dividing it into two periods, before and after the peak, as we have done in previous chapters. The reason for this is that the NGK peak is so recent (2012) that the second map would only cover three years, leaving insufficient data to be helpful for interpretation.

The first salient feature to catch the eye are the large patches of growth in Flevoland and the western parts of Gelderland (Nunspeet, Apeldoorn, Ede, and Barneveld). The churches there have all been noted before for their powerful growth, just like Houten and areas around Rotterdam. Overijssel also has places showing strong growth, however, including Heino (in the municipality of Raalte), Deventer, and Dalfsen. Small growth is visible in Weststellingwerf and Berkelland, just like Rijsbergen, Eindhoven, and Groningen. There was a significant drop in NGK members in Noord-Holland, especially in the area surrounding Amsterdam. The areas around Zwolle and Kampen show a decline as well. We already noted that Zwolle had two shrinking NGK churches, but Kampen generally still appeared on the lists with the highest numbers of NGK members. Closer examination, however, reveals that the local church in Kampen shrank from over 3,000 members in 1970 to 2,000 in 2015. The other church in the municipality of Kampen (i.e., IJsselmuiden), was much smaller, but it too shrank, from 315 members to 227.

## 19.3. Segregation

The final part of this chapter will be dedicated to the degree of NGK clustering in the country. The first statistic for measuring this is the dissimilarity index, which calculates how many people in the minority population (i.e., the NGK) would need to move in order to obtain a homogeneous distribution over the majority population (i.e., the Netherlands).

Figure 19.7 shows that the value of the dissimilarity index for the NGK is consistently somewhere between 0.65 and 0.7, so that the range is very small. This agrees with our earlier finding that the NGK featured a very stable development in terms of their share of the Dutch population. However, 65% to 70% of the NGK membership would still have to move in order to obtain similar numbers of NGK members across all municipalities. This indicates that the NGK were nonetheless fairly clustered in the period under study. As we saw, members were found to be living largely in a small patch of land in the middle of the Netherlands.



Figure 19.7. The dissimilarity and exposure indices of the NGK

In addition to the dissimilarity index, there is also the exposure index. This value shows the chance of members of the minority group (i.e., the NGK) meeting a non-member in their neighbourhood. For the period in question, this value remained between 0.95 and 0.98. While there is little to say about the development of this value over the years, the value itself does show that the chance of an NGK-member meeting another one in a Dutch municipality is rather small.

## 19.4. Conclusions

The NGK are a denomination that has shown a very distinct pattern of distribution. Through the years, it spread out over the country, but the areas of concentration remained the same. The NGK were most significantly present in the central parts of the country, namely in Western Overijssel and Gelderland, Flevoland and Utrecht. Two additional clusters of NGK members exist around Amsterdam and Rotterdam, but the Amsterdam cluster in particular shrank considerably, as was true for the other orthodox churches there. The NGK were almost entirely absent in the southern provinces of Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and Zeeland, as well as the northern provinces of Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe.

The continued, recent growth of the NGK since 2012, after their peak, can also easily be localised. There are a few congregations that showed immense growth over the years, including Houten, Ede, and Bunschoten. The municipalities for these congregations are all in the provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht, showing that the NGK flourished there. The three congregations all had over 1,500 members in 2015. The above information leaves us with an image of the NGK as a denomination of medium-sized or even large places, with a few concentrations in the Netherlands that make them fairly well spread out. Growth occurred in several places within these concentrated clusters. The churches there that featured extreme growth compensated for the churches that were shrinking or disappearing.

# 20. Gereformeerde Gemeenten

The GG denomination was introduced in chapter 10, where we presented and described their continuing growth and high numbers of baptised members and baptisms. Founded in 1907, they make up one of the older denominations in the database, but since data collection did not begin until 1948, the analyses have a later starting point. In this chapter, the geographic distribution of the GG in the Netherlands will be presented and explored, as well as the distribution of growth, the influence of urbanisation, and the level of segregation.

## 20.1. The distribution of members of the GG in the Netherlands

## 20.1.1. The national distribution

The distribution of the GG in the Netherlands can be shown in the following graphical representation with GG members as a percentage of the local Dutch population in each municipality:



Figure 20.1. The distribution of the GG in shares of the Dutch population

The maps show a familiar pattern, since a very similar distribution can be found on maps featuring SGP voters, the political party of choice for experientialist people. The geographical pattern that emerges here in figure 20.1 is known as the Dutch Bible belt, a strip of land in the Netherlands running from Zeeland through Zuid-Holland and parts of western Noord-Brabant to Utrecht, western Gelderland, and Overijssel. In 1950, one of the first years after the GG started collecting data, Zeeland saw the highest percentages of GG members, with large numbers in Terneuzen, the entire island of Walcheren, and most of Schouwen-Duiveland. The high numbers continued to Zuid-Holland, with many members in Rotterdam and The Hague. There were also some GG people around Amsterdam, but not as many as in the aforementioned municipalities. Brabant and Utrecht both had lower percentages, but Gelderland was densely populated with GG members in municipalities like Barneveld, Ede, and Apeldoorn. The GG in Overijssel were concentrated mostly around Zwolle, Kampen, and Rijssen.

By 2015, the Bible belt pattern was still in place, as the overall distribution had changed very little. There were still concentrations of members in Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, Noord-Brabant, Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijssel, but now with the addition of some other municipalities. Three churches opened in the province of Flevoland, in Lelystad, Marknesse, and Emmeloord. In addition, GG members were most notably present in Overijssel, Gelderland, and Zeeland. They could be found in municipalities like Kampen, Nunspeet, Rijssen, Barneveld, and in almost all municipalities of Walcheren in the province of Zeeland. There was, however, no growth in Rotterdam and Utrecht. The members around Amsterdam disappeared almost entirely. Another important feature of note, which Janse (2015) had already spotted, is that the relative number of GG members in the Veluwe, near the border with Utrecht and the Betuwe, grew. Some 13.4% of all GG members lived there in 1964; in 1974 this was 14.8%, 16.9% in 1984, 20.4% in 1994, 23.6% in 2004, and 25.4% in 2014 (p.137-8).

#### 20.1.2. The distribution over provinces

To further describe the geographic distribution of the GG in the Netherlands, their distribution over and within the provinces will be presented. Figure 20.2 shows the percentage of each province's population that is made up of GG members:



Figure 20.2. The share of GG members per province

This figure gives a clear indication of the provinces with the highest relative number of GG members. Zeeland has by far the largest percentage, around 6%, which is higher than the percentage of members of any other denominations anywhere at any time, with the one exception of the GKN. Zeeland is followed at a distance by Overijssel, Gelderland, and Zuid-Holland, which all contain around 1% GG members. Utrecht came in at slightly under 1%, and the other provinces all stayed below 0.5%. Groningen, Drenthe, Limburg, and Noord-Holland did not have a sufficient share of GG members to register on the graph. Some of the provinces with GG members also show a slightly increasing share: Overijssel, Gelderland, and Zeeland. In these places, the number of GG members grew slightly more than the overall population did. In Utrecht and Zuid-Holland, however, their relative numbers decreased.

Figure 20.3 further explores the distribution over the provinces by showing the percentage of the total GG population living in each province:



Figure 20.3. The distribution of GG members over the provinces

Interestingly, the highest relative number of GG members lived in Zuid-Holland. This makes Zuid-Holland a very popular place for GG members, but given the size of the overall population there, the GG do not constitute a high percentage of the Dutch population, as we saw in figure 20.2. In fact, the share of GG members living in Zuid-Holland dropped over the years, going from almost 40% in 1948 to 30% in 2015. The second largest share of GG members can be found in Zeeland, with around 22%. This number stayed stable over the years. The GKN population in Gelderland, as we have already seen, increased, going from 12% to over 23%. The GG in Overijssel stayed stable at around 10%. Utrecht and Noord-Brabant are very small, but they also stayed stable, at around 8% and 3%, respectively. Most other provinces only had a very low proportion of GG members and showed little or no sign of increase.

#### 20.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

Finally, we can present the municipalities with the highest numbers and shares of GG members:

1950		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Rotterdam	7,497	Rijssen-Holten	6,770
Rijssen-Holten	3,802	Reimerswaal	6,631
Reimerswaal	3,406	Barneveld	6,194
Barneveld	3,295	Nunspeet	3,367
Tholen	2,064	Borsele	3,233
Middelburg	2,063	Veere	2,983
Veere	2,001	Ede	2,774
The Hague	1,747	Middelburg	2,559
Dirksland	1,648	Tholen	2,378
Borsele	1,621	Veenendaal	2,240

Table 20.1. The top 10 municipalities with the largest number of GG members

This table shows that in 1950, five of the ten municipalities with the highest number of GG members could be found in Zeeland. Three others were in Zuid-Holland, and the final two in Overijssel and Gelderland. The largest number of GG members at the time lived in Rotterdam, a large city in Zuid-Holland. The presence of The Hague on this list is surprising, since it is located outside the Bible belt and also represents one of the largest cities in the Netherlands, which, as we saw in the preceding descriptions of other denominations, generally is not a beneficial factor for the presence of churches. The other municipalities were all either large towns of around 20,000 inhabitants, or small cities with just over 50,000 inhabitants.

By 2015, the landscape had changed somewhat. Rotterdam and The Hague, the large cities on the list for 1950, had both disappeared, as had Dirksland, the final municipality in Zuid-Holland. They were replaced by Ede, Nunspeet, and Veenendaal, all municipalities in Gelderland and Utrecht, of varying sizes. This second list still features five municipalities in Zeeland, the same ones from 1950 in fact, but not in exactly the same order. Rijssen-Holten is the only remaining municipality from Overijssel on the list, and by 2015 in fact features at the very top. Another remarkable detail is that the absolute numbers in the respective municipalities were higher in 2015 than they were in 1950, confirming the finding from chapter 10 that the GG was still growing by 2015, while also setting the GG apart from the other denominations whose geographic distribution we have presented before, which all showed decreasing membership numbers in their ten largest municipalities. The only other exception to this pattern were the CGK, where the four largest municipalities were larger in 2015 than at the denomination's peak, although the remaining six did show a decrease.

In addition to the highest absolute numbers of GG members, information is available on the municipalities with the highest relative numbers:

1950		2015	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Dirksland	26%	Reimerswaal	30%
Rijssen-Holten	22%	Scherpenzeel	21%
Reimerswaal	22%	Rijssen-Holten	18%
Barneveld	17%	Borsele	14%
Tholen	13%	Dirksland	14%
Veere	12%	Veere	14%
Scherpenzeel	12%	Nunspeet	13%
Lisse	10%	Kapelle	12%
Aalburg	10%	Barneveld	11%
Borsele	10%	Aalburg	10%

Table 20.2. Top 10 municipalities with the largest share of GG members

Almost all of the municipalities on the 1950 list also appear on the lists with absolute numbers, but not entirely in the same order. New additions are Scherpenzeel (Gelderland), Lisse (Zuid-Holland), and Aalburg (Noord-Brabant), which are all small municipalities of up to 15,000 inhabitants and over 1,000 GG members. By 2015, two new municipalities appear on the list: Nunspeet (Gelderland), with almost 3,500 members in a total population of 27,000, and Kapelle, with one church of 1,550 members and a total population of 12,500.

#### 20.1.4. Urbanisation in the GG

Earlier findings showed that the GG did not have a large presence in big cities or all but disappeared from them. The places showing the highest membership numbers are small cities or large towns. These data can be linked to the information on the degree of urbanisation in the Netherlands, yielding the image in figure 20.4:



Figure 20.4. The development of the GG and the degree of urbanisation

This figure shows an almost immediate drop in GG members in the G4 (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht). As earlier information showed, the GG were indeed present in all of these municipalities, but their share in all of them dropped to around 0.01% of the Dutch population. Instead, the GG seem to have done well in almost all other types of places. The largest growth and the highest number of members can be found in slightly urbanised places; these are municipalities like Barneveld, Kapelle, and Nunspeet. There seems to be little separating the GG population levels in the three remaining categories of urbanisation. The GG show virtually equal levels in highly urbanised areas, moderately urbanised areas, and non-urbanised areas. Non-urbanised places grew faster than the places of high, moderate, and slight urbanisation until the late 1960s, but the growth in rural areas then went on to drop, while remaining steady for the other categories. This means that by 2015, rural areas end up as the smallest among the four groups It can be concluded, then, that the GG are a denomination of medium-sized places.



Figure 20.5. GG members over different areas of urbanisation

This conclusion finds further confirmation in figure 20.5, showing the percentage of GG members in different areas of urbanisation. The GG gradually disappeared from the G4, which ended with no more than around 2% of the GG membership in 2015. For the rest, however, members seem to have been divided almost evenly into quarters over the other areas.

## 20.2. The distribution of the growth of the GG

Having looked at the distribution of the GG in the Netherlands, we now turn to examine the distribution of the growth. The first map below shows the growth of the GG over the entire period of data collection, with the exception of the years around the GGN secession, in order to limit the disrupting influence of this one-time event on the larger picture. The second map shows distribution for the years around the founding of the GGN.



Figure 20.6. The geographical distribution of the growth of the GG

The growth of the GG is presented above in two maps. The first map shows the growth of the GG over the entire period of data collection, and the second map shows the growth in the year of the schism with the GGN and the years immediately following it (1953-1956).

The distribution of the growth of the GG over the entire period shows a very typical pattern, as the more central places in the Netherlands reflect the most persistent growth. Ede, Apeldoorn, Barneveld, Veenendaal, Nunspeet, Kampen, and Rijssen all showed growth. The island of Walcheren also shows increasing numbers of GG members, as do parts of Noord-Brabant (although the congregations there are all small) and Utrecht. It was mostly the regions around Amsterdam and other parts of Zeeland that were shrinking. Again, these places in Zeeland only reflect small congregations, where numbers shrank much less than one might initially assume due to the use of percentages here. The loss of members in Amsterdam is a common phenomenon, which we also encountered with most other denominations. There was a slight drop in Zuid-Holland as well around the Rotterdam region, together with the edges of the Bible belt or just outside of it, mostly in Noord-Holland and Enschede. The growth shown in Groningen and Den Helder looks significant, but in fact both places only had one, fairly small GG congregation, so that the growth on the map looks stronger than it actually was.

The second map, showing the growth around the time of the schism with the GGN, reveals additional information. By 1954, the GGN already had 33 local congregations, spread throughout the country. The largest ones were also the ones that had the greatest effect on GG membership on the map above. These were Alblasserdam, Barneveld, Gouda, Rijssen, Terneuzen, and Veenendaal.

## 20.3. Segregation

A final statistic to analyse is the degree of segregation in the GG, meaning that we want to measure the concentration and clustering of the GG. This can be done using different methods, two of which are presented here.

The first method is the dissimilarity index, which shows the percentage of people in the minority population (i.e., the GG) who would have to change location in order to attain an equal distribution in the majority population (i.e., the Netherlands). This statistic is presented in figure 20.7. A dissimilarity index of 0 means a perfect distribution and 1 means total segregation. The dissimilarity index for the GG remains around 0.75, meaning that 75% of GG members would have to move for an unsegregated distribution. The line does rises slowly to 0.79 by 2015, indicating increased segregation for the GG. This number is higher than it is for most other churches, with the exception of the NGK, a denomination that is roughly a third of the size of the GG. This certainly has an impact on the degree of segregation according to the dissimilarity index.



Figure 20.7. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the GG

The second measure is the exposure index. This index measures the chance of a member of the minority group meeting a non-member in the member's own neighbourhood. As figure 20.7 shows, the exposure index for the GG remains between 90% and 95%. This means, conversely, that the chance of a GG member meeting a GG member was 5-10%.

## 20.4. Conclusions

The distribution of the GG is familiar and has been extensively discussed, especially in relation to the Bible belt (Kruiit, 1943; Knippenberg, 1992; Snel, 2007). The maps presented in this chapter clearly show the shape of the Bible belt, the strip of the Netherlands stretching from Zeeland to the west of Overijssel, passing through Zuid-Holland, the northwest of Noord-Brabant, Utrecht, and the west of Gelderland. In these places, GG churches showed to have their highest concentration. The largest group of GG members lived in Zuid-Holland, but due to the size of the overall Dutch population there, their relative size is negligible. Instead, the largest share of GG members can be found in Zeeland, especially on Walcheren, Zuid-Beveland, and Tholen. Gelderland is the province with the next largest membership, with high numbers in Ede, Apeldoorn, Nunspeet, and Barneveld. Overijssel had members mostly in Rijssen, Kampen, and Genemuiden. The growth in the large cities declined very soon after the beginning of data collection, but the growth in areas of other levels of urbanisation continued to more recent years. The GG members who could once be found in The Hague and Amsterdam disappeared almost entirely, but GG churches grew in municipalities like those mentioned in section 20.2, among them Borsele, Nunspeet, and Genemuiden. The GG are fairly segregated in the Netherlands; with a dissimilarity index of 75%, they represent the most concentrated denomination of all in the dataset so far.

# 21. Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland

The GGN were introduced in chapter 11, where we described their temporal development. The present chapter will offer an analysis of their geographical development and distribution in the Netherlands, with attention to their presence in the country, provinces, and municipalities, as well as the degrees of urbanisation and segregation they show.

For the GGN, like the other small denominations described earlier in this study, we need to keep in mind that some of their congregations have active members who live in other municipalities. One example is the large GGN congregation of Uddel, which is within the municipality of Apeldoorn. The church building, however, is located just over the municipal border with Ermelo. Most of the more than 1,100 members of this congregation live in Apeldoorn, but in light of our methods, they must all be ascribed to Ermelo.

21.1 The distribution of members of the GGN in the Netherlands

#### 21.1.1. The national distribution

The GGN is an experientialist denomination, originating from within the GG. This would suggest that they have a heavy concentration in the Bible belt, and figure 21.1 shows that this is indeed the case:



Figure 21.1. The distribution of the GGN in shares of the Dutch population

The GGN show a distributional pattern very similar to that of the GG, but as they are a much smaller denomination, there are fewer places with GGN congregations. In 1960, the municipalities with the most GGN members were Rijssen-Holten and Vriezenveen in Twenterand in the province of Overijssel; Ede, Barneveld, Nunspeet, Ermelo, Neder-Betuwe, and surrounding municipalities in Gelderland; a few municipalities in Utrecht and Noord-Brabant; Rotterdam; and, in Zeeland, most of Schouwen-Duiveland and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, as well as parts of Walcheren and Zuid-Beveland.

By 2015, the municipalities in Gelderland, Overijssel, and Zeeland seem to have consolidated themselves. They had grown and even spread a little, with members also in Kampen and Uddel (in the municipality of Ermelo). The churches in Noord-Brabant and Utrecht remain on the map, but the GGN disappeared from Rotterdam. Zeeland kept its GGN members.

In both years, the GGN were altogether absent from Limburg and the largest parts of Noord-Brabant, as well as the north of the Netherlands. No GGN congregations were found in Drenthe, Groningen, or Friesland, nor has there ever been a GGN church there. Noord-Holland too was almost entirely devoid of GGN members, although a small church in Aalsmeer was still operational in 2015. There had been local congregations in Haarlem and Hilversum, but they closed in 1961 and 2004, respectively. The denomination really was concentrated in the region stretching from Zeeland to Overijssel, like the GG and SGP voters in general.

#### 21.1.2. The distribution over provinces

With our description of the general distribution of the GGN in the Netherlands, we also noted their distribution over the provinces. This distribution can, however, be examined in greater detail. Accordingly, figure 21.2 shows GGN members as a percentage of the overall Dutch population per province:



Figure 21.2. The share of GGN members per province

This figure corroborates conclusions already drawn in the earlier analyses. The GGN were indeed altogether absent from Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, and Limburg during the period under study. GGN members made up 0.01% of the population in Noord-Holland in 1960, but their share dropped to 0% in 2015. Their share of the population in Noord-Brabant did not rise above 0.03% for either year. The remaining provinces had populations of over 0.1% GGN members. Among them, Overijssel had the lowest share, with just 0.11% in 1960 and 0.1% in 2015, pointing to a slight decrease over the years. The same goes for Utrecht, where the percentage dropped from 0.2% to 0.15%. In Zuid-Holland, however, the percentage rose from 0.11% to 0.16%, nearly equalling the GGN as a percentage of the Dutch population. The GGN also grew in Flevoland. Gelderland shows a significant increase from 0.34% to 0.57%, confirming the data from earlier maps in this chapter showing an increase in the municipalities of that province. By far the highest share of GGN members in any province, however, was found in Zeeland, where the GGN constituted 0.92% of the population in 1960. In 2015, that percentage had dropped somewhat to 0.86%, but it still remained the province with the largest share of any.

The above information can also be presented by province as a percentage of the total GGN population:



Figure 21.3. The distribution of GGN members over the provinces

This figure shows that even though the GGN had the largest membership relative to that of the general Dutch population in Zeeland, this is not the case relative to the total GGN membership as such. By far the largest percentage of GGN members lived in Gelderland, with an average of 41% over the years. As noted, their numbers increased significantly there. In 1954, 21% of all GGN members lived in Gelderland; by 2015 this had risen to 48%. The province with the second largest representation in this figure is Zuid-Holland. As the Dutch population there is very large, the share of GGN may indeed seem low relative to the Dutch population (as in figure 21.2 above), but the fact of the matter is that they represent a large proportion of the GGN total membership. On average, 23% of GGN members could be found in Zuid-Holland, albeit with a fair decrease from 29% in 1954 to 22% in 2015. Zuid-Holland is followed in size by Zeeland, with on average 17% of the GGN membership, dropping from 19% in 1954 to a little under 14% in 2015. The percentage for Zeeland remained by far the most stable of all, indicating that GGN members who lived in Zeeland tended to stay there.

Apart from these provinces with the most prominent GGN membership, Utrecht shows a fair share of members, with 14% and 8%, and, to a lesser extent, Overijssel, with 10% and 5%. Once again, Noord-Brabant, Noord-Holland, and Flevoland each make up a very small percentage of the total GGN population. Again, Limburg, Drenthe, Friesland and Groningen are missing altogether.

#### 21.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

Finally, the distribution of the GGN can be examined in greater detail by analysing the Dutch municipalities with the most GGN members.

1960		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Neder-Betuwe	1,578	Neder-Betuwe	3,950
Barneveld	1,173	Barneveld	3,608
Terneuzen	1,063	Gouda	1,678
Schouwen-Duiveland	936	Alblasserdam	1,337
Alblasserdam	741	Ermelo	1,119
Veenendaal	705	Ede	949
Rijssen-Holten	702	Veenendaal	933
Gouda	629	Schouwen-Duiveland	908
Ede	495	Terneuzen	759
Rhenen	447	Rhenen	730

Table 21.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest number of GGN members

Table 21.1 shows the ten municipalities with the highest absolute numbers of GGN members. Three of the ten biggest municipalities for 1960 are in Gelderland, with two more in Utrecht along the Gelderland border. In fact, Neder-Betuwe, Barneveld, Veenendaal, Ede, and Rhenen are all adjacent municipalities and form one large patch of GGN members. The remaining municipalities on the list for 1960 are found in Zuid-Holland (Alblasserdam and Gouda), Zeeland (Schouwen-Duiveland and Terneuzen), and Overijssel (Rijssen-Holten).

In 2015, the number of members was higher than the 1960 level in almost every municipality, once again demonstrating the continuing growth of the GGN. All municipalities on the list for 1960 remain for 2015, with the one exception of Rijssen-Holten, which disappeared to make way for Ermelo. On closer examination, it emerges that the church in Rijssen, which had 921 members in 1954, saw a dramatic drop in membership from 394 to 57 between 1980 and 1981, as one of the few congregations that left with the schism and joined the GGN (by) almost in its entirety. Ermelo, on the other hand, grew from 500 members in 1954 to 1,119 in 2015. This development must be attributed the aforementioned congregation in Uddel, which was founded in 1965 and experienced strong growth. While the church building is located in Ermelo, most of its members live in Apeldoorn. For the rest, almost all the churches that appear on both lists grew considerably after 1960, sometimes reaching two or three times their original size. The only municipalities showing decline are Schouwen-Duiveland and Terneuzen. Both lost a number of members with the schism of 1981: Nieuwerkerk and Zierikzee in Schouwen-Duiveland both left the GGN entirely, taking 400 members with them. The congregation of Nieuwerkerk returned to the GGN in 2009, but the general decline in membership did not stop.

The fact that most of the municipalities that appear on the 1960 list return in the 2015 list indicates that the GGN had an extremely stable distribution. Most other denominations described in earlier chapters show more differences between the two or three points of measurement on the lists, suggesting that their members did occasionally change location. GGN members seem to have stayed in their place of origin much more than in other denominations.

1960		2015	
Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share
Neder-Betuwe	13%	Neder-Betuwe	17%
Scherpenzeel	6%	Alblasserdam	7%
Alblasserdam	5%	Barneveld	7%
Barneveld	5%	Ermelo	4%
Schouwen-Duiveland	4%	Scherpenzeel	4%
Rijssen-Holten	4%	Rhenen	4%
Rhenen	4%	Leerdam	3%
Veenendaal	3%	Neerijnen	3%
Terneuzen	2%	Schouwen-Duiveland	2%
Dirksland	2%	Gouda	2%

In table 21.2, we see the municipalities with have the highest share of GGN members relative to the Dutch population:

Table 21.2. Top 10 municipalities with the largest share of GGN members

Eight of the municipalities on the 1960 list recur from the list showing absolute numbers. This means that, in the municipalities where the GGN had the largest absolute membership numbers, they also had the highest relative membership numbers, indicating that the GGN formed a consistent part of the Dutch population.

Municipalities that were larger by share than absolute numbers are Scherpenzeel and Melissant (in the municipality of Dirksland). Gouda and Ede, which appeared on the list with largest absolute numbers, are not on the present list because, even though they are medium-sized to large churches, the municipalities in which they are located have a larger population than the municipalities which have taken their place on this list. Most of the latter have up to 25,000 inhabitants, except for Terneuzen, with 43,000 inhabitants, confirming that the GGN indeed had a very large presence there in 1960. Dirksland did not appear on the earlier list with absolute numbers in table 21.1 because the GGN only had 143 members there, which is much less than the lowest entry on the list with absolute numbers has. Dirksland, however, is also a very small town, with just over 6,000 inhabitants. The same goes for Scherpenzeel; even with a congregation numbering only 230 members, it still makes up 6% of the total population of 4,000.

The image for 2015 shows very little change. Eight of the municipalities on this list also appeared on either the list for 1960 or on the lists in table 21.1. Gouda's return can be explained by the church's growth from 600 to 1,700 members, possibly as a result of the presence of thea large experientialist middle school *Driestar*. The new entries for 2015 are Leerdam and Neerijnen. Neerijnen is a small town of 12,000 inhabitants with a medium-sized church of 300 members, and Leerdam a medium-sized town of 20,000 inhabitants with a large church of 640 members.

*21.1.4. The growth of the GGN and the degree of urbanisation* Figure 21.4 below shows the number of GGN members in places with different degrees of urbanisation:



Figure 21.4. The development of the GGN and the degree of urbanisation

It is clear that the GGN are almost entirely absent from the G4. As we saw earlier, the GGN have no churches in Amsterdam or The Hague, and only small congregations in Rotterdam and Utrecht. Instead, the strongest GGN presence is in slightly urbanised places, like Barneveld, Ermelo, and Rhenen. The second largest number of GGN members can be found in the rural areas, for instance Dirksland and Neerijnen. Moderately urbanised and highly urbanised places have similar membership numbers, but the highly urbanised areas are, interestingly, the only place where the schism of 1981 is clearly visible. The sharp

decline evident there is probably accounted for by two places, Gouda and Veenendaal, where the majority of the membership left. Gouda shrank from 1,229 members to 390, and Veenendaal went from 1,719 members in 1980 to 446 in 1981. The Gouda members returned in the period 2009-2011, as seen in the figure above. In Veenendaal, many individual members returned to the GGN. Churches in places with other degrees of urbanisation also lost members in the schism, as noted before, but most of their losses were not as high as they were in these two places and are therefore less noticeable on the graph.



Figure 21.5. GGN members over different areas of urbanisation

This same information can be seen in figure 21.5, where each area of urbanisation is shown as a proportion of GGN members. As noted, the GGN share in the G4 declined from 3% to only 0.5%. In their early years, the GGN were divided almost equally over the remaining areas of urbanisation, but with the 1981 schism, the highly urbanised areas suddenly experienced a declining share from 25% to 15%, while the share of slightly urbanised areas gradually grew from 30% in 1956 to 40% in 1980, thereafter shrinking somewhat again until they amounted to 35% of the total GGN membership in 2015. By that year, highly urbanised and moderately urbanised places made up 17% and 18% of the total GGN population, respectively, with 35% in slightly urbanised areas, and 28% in rural places, showing that GGN members generally preferred a less urban environment.

## 21.2. The distribution of the growth of the GGN

Finally, we can present the distribution of the growth between 1960 and 2015, as in the following figure:



Figure 21.6. The geographical distribution of the growth of the GGN between the beginning and recently

Figure 21.6 shows the distribution of the growth in the GGN between 1960 and 2015, and, separately, the growth around the schism. Earlier findings are corroborated. The GGN grew in municipalities like Barneveld and Ede, as well as their surrounding municipalities. Nunspeet and Twenterand also showed some increase, as did a number of municipalities around the borders of Gelderland, Zuid-Holland, and Utrecht. Zeeland is mixed; Schouwen-Duiveland shows a decrease, due to the strong impact of the schism.

The second map in figure 21.6 details the growth for the years surrounding the schism, and the places where the greatest declines were experienced in the wake of that event. It shows that Zeeland, the area around Rotterdam, and Rijssen-Holten suffered the greatest losses in GGN membership, and that they largely coincide with the places showing decrease on the map detailing the growth between 1960 and 2015. In Rotterdam, the losses must be explained by the general exodus from large cities which we also saw with other denominations, but in Rijssen and Zeeland, the drop in membership was due largely to the schism.

## 21.3. Segregation

A final statistic pertaining to the geographical distribution of the GGN is segregation. The two indices used show the extent of GGN concentration in one place and the balance of distribution on the national level.

The first measure of segregation is the dissimilarity index, showing how many people of the denomination would have to change location so as to achieve a homogeneous distribution of the GGN membership in the Netherlands. This index stayed for a very long time around 0.85, before rising to almost 0.9 in 2005, indicating that 85-90% of the GGN would have to move to achieve a perfectly integrated group. For the GG, the average was 75%. This shows that the GGN do indeed cluster together to a significant degree, as we also saw in earlier chapters on other denominations.



Figure 21.7. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the GGN

The second measure presented in figure 21.7 is the exposure index. This value shows the chance of one member of the minority group (i.e., the GGN) meeting a non-member in that member's own municipality. This value hovers between 0.95 and 1 over the period studied, but seems to be a little on the decline for the later years. The chance of one GGN member running into another GGN member is very small indeed.

## 21.4. Conclusions

The GGN make up a small denomination, but also one that is very stable, provided that we disregard the shift caused by the schism of 1981. The denomination's growth continued over the entire period of data collection discussed in this study, even in spite of the schism, and its share of the Dutch population was consistently rising. GGN members were largely concentrated in the area around Barneveld and Ede, as well as most parts of Zeeland, clustering closely together. The distribution did not change significantly over the years, showing that mobility was low. The GGN membership could hardly be found in large cities at all, preferring rural areas and areas of slight urbanisation. The geographical distribution of the growth showed heavy signs of influence from the schism, especially since there were three places where close to a thousand members left the denomination.

# 22. Hersteld Hervormde Kerk

The HHK was already discussed in chapter 12. This very young denomination was founded in 2004, when the GKN, NHK, and ELK merged to form the PKN. This chapter will be shorter than the other chapters on distribution. This is mostly due to the fact that the HHK only was around for eleven years between its foundation and the final year under study and because data collection started in 2010, meaning that there are only six years of usable data available.

## 22.1. The distribution of the members of the HHK in the Netherlands

## 22.1.1. The national distribution

First of all, the distribution of the HHK in the Netherlands can be shown using a map:



Figure 22.1. The distribution of the HHK in shares of the Dutch population

The distribution of the HHK is fairly similar to that of the GG and the GGN, although there are some differences. There are, for instance, almost no HHK congregations on the map in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and relatively few in Walcheren, another island in Zeeland. Zuid-Holland has quite a few municipalities with HHK congregations, while parts of western Utrecht and Noord-Brabant that are traditionally associated with the Bible belt also have significant shares of HHK members. Most HHK members, however, are concentrated in the Betuwe, Ede, Barneveld, Apeldoorn, and the western edges of Gelderland and Overijssel, from Nunspeet to Staphorst. In addition, there was a small congregation in Wouterswoude (Friesland), in the municipality of Dantumadeel, and a congregation in Hollandscheveld (Hoogeveen). Rijssen had a large HHK congregation, and Twenterand had one small congregation in Westerhaar and a medium-sized one in Vriezenveen.

The HHK shows few congregations in the Netherlands outside of these municipalities. This means that Limburg, Drenthe, Friesland, Groningen, and Noord-Holland were virtually devoid of HHK members.

#### 22.1.2. The distribution over provinces

The distribution can be examined further by looking at the percentage of HHK members in the Dutch population by province. Chapter 12 showed that members of the HHK make up on average 0.35% of the Dutch population. In 2015, they were distributed over the provinces as follows:



Figure 22.2. The number of HHK members per province in 2015

Figure 22.2 shows that the highest percentages of HHK members were found in Gelderland, Overijssel, Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, and Utrecht. All of them show over 0.4% HHK members. Flevoland also has a small number of members, who make up 0.23% of the Dutch population. However, this percentage is accounted for exclusively by the presence of a congregation numbering nearly one thousand members in Urk, since there are no other HHK congregations in the province. A small percentage of the Noord-Brabant population is composed of HHK members. There are six HHK congregations there: two fairly large ones in Veen and Wijk bij Heusden (in the municipality of Aalburg), three medium-sized congregations in Loon op Zand, Sprang Capelle (Waalwijk), and Werkendam, and one very small one in Heesbeen (Heusden). The remaining provinces show to be almost entirely devoid of HHK members; there are two local congregations in Friesland (Hardegarijp and Wouterswoude) and two in Drenthe (Vledderveen and Hollandscheveld), but Groningen, Limburg, and Noord-Holland hold zero percent of the HHK membership.

The next statistic is the distribution of HHK members by province as part of the denomination's total membership. For the HHK, we have used a different lay-out to facilitate the presentation of the data:



Figure 22.3. The distribution of HHK members over the provinces

Figure 22.3 shows the percentage of the HHK membership living in each province. Clearly, the province with the largest number of HHK members over the period examined is Gelderland, accounting for 33% of the total membership. The second province is Zuid-Holland, with 30%, followed by Overijssel, at 17%. Utrecht only housed a small part of the HHK population (9%), while the remaining provinces are hardly represented on the graph at all.

### 22.1.3. The distribution over municipalities

We can also look at the municipalities with the most HHK members, both in absolute numbers and relative to the Dutch population:

2015		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Share
Staphorst	5,025	Goedereede	33%
Goedereede	3,684	Staphorst	31%
Ede	3,158	Ouderkerk aan den IJssel	17%
Zaltbommel	2,987	Neder-Betuwe	13%
Neder-Betuwe	2,944	Zaltbommel	11%
Barneveld	2,320	Tholen	8%
Tholen	2,012	Elburg	8%
Katwijk	1,992	Middelharnis	8%
Elburg	1,788	Aalburg	7%
Middelharnis	1,399	Zederik	7%

Figure 22.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest number and share of HHK members

Staphorst is one of the largest municipalities, both absolutely and relatively. The HHK in Staphorst is currently also the third-largest church building in the Netherlands, seating 2,300 people. The congregation also had over 5,000 members in 2015. Goedereede has three congregations, the largest of which is in Ouddorp, with 2,300 members. All of the municipalities on this list follow this pattern, housing between one and three congregations, one of which numbered around a thousand members. Some municipalities, like Ede, Opheusden in Neder-Betuwe, and Doornspijk in Elburg, even had congregations numbering around 2,000 members.

The list featuring the highest membership by shares is slightly different. Seven municipalities listed there can also be found on the first list, but three others are new, as Barneveld, Ede, and Katwijk made way for Ouderkerk, Aalburg, and Zederik. All three new municipalities have no more than 13,000 inhabitants, and one or more HHK congregations with around a thousand combined members. They were too small to appear on the list with the highest absolute numbers, but did have large memberships relative to the population of the municipalities in which they are located.

## 22.1.4. Urbanisation in the HHK

The relative HHK membership numbers showed that many municipalities figuring among the top ten were medium-sized towns. Figure 22.4 below shows the relationship between the urbanisation of the municipalities and the HHK in more detail:



Figure 22.4. The development of the HHK and the degree of urbanisation

Since the HHK is a very young denomination and only limited years of data are available for it, there is little change in the distribution over municipalities with different degrees of urbanisation, which explains why the lines across the bars are so straight. There is, however, some interesting information here, since the trend seems to be that the less urbanised a place is, the higher the number of HHK members. Places that are slightly urbanised or not urbanised at all contain the highest membership numbers, while the figure shows almost no HHK members in the G4 and very few in highly urbanised and moderately urbanised areas. HHK members are missing from the G4 altogether, showing that the HHK is indeed a church of the smaller towns.

## 22.2. The distribution of the growth of the HHK

A further statistic that can be presented is the geographical distribution of HHK growth. As shown in chapter 12, the HHK grew steadily between the first and final year of data collection. Figure 22.5 shows the precise locations of growth:



Figure 22.5. The geographical distribution of the growth of the HHK

HHK growth was mixed. Roughly thirty municipalities shrank, including some we already encountered in the lists of municipalities with the most HHK members. Staphorst, Goedereede, and Elburg all shrank by 1-1.5%, while also Tholen, Neter-Betuwe, and Ede declined by up to 0.5%. Most of the other municipalities showing the highest levels of decline only had very small congregations of around a hundred members that lost some members.

On the other hand, there were over fifty municipalities that saw growth between 2010 and 2015. These include Ouderkerk, Barneveld, Katwijk, and Middelharnis from the top ten lists, which all grew by 1-2.5%. Alblasserdam showed a very strong growth of 25%, like Apeldoorn and Rotterdam, at 12%, and Scherpenzeel, Hardinxveld-Giessendam, and Reimerswaal, around 7%.

## 22.3. Segregation

Since information on the HHK is available for a select few years and since the denomination has only grown steadily, in pace with the development of the Dutch population, one might expect there to be very little change in the different indices of segregation. Nevertheless, they can still tell us something about the clustering of the HHK. The dissimilarity index tells us how many members of the HHK would have to change location in order to attain an even spread over

the country. This index is stable around 85%, roughly the same as the GGN, which is less than half the size of the HHK.



Figure 22.6. Segregation in the HHK

The exposure index measures the chance of a member of the HHK meeting a non-member in the municipality in which that member lives. This index comes in at over 90%, which is slightly lower than it is for most other denominations. The integration of the HHK is therefore a little lower than it is for other churches, especially given its size.

## 22.4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the HHK clearly is an experientialist denomination in its distribution, with members from Zeeland to Overijssel, the largest numbers coming in Zuid-Holland and Gelderland. Interestingly, it is the only experientialist church in the Kampen dataset with members in Staphorst, even though Staphorst is often mentioned as a typical Bible belt town (Oosterbeek, 2006). The majority of the HHK members live in medium-sized towns and slightly urbanised areas, and they also have the highest relative representation there. Almost two-thirds of the municipalities with HHKs showed an increasing number of HHK members. The rest were decreasing in size, but not drastically so.

# 23. Gereformeerde Bond

The final chapter in this part of the study will describe the geographical distribution of the GB. While the topic has already been addressed by Smelik (2003), our data extend to 2015, giving us an additional twelve years of information to work with. The GB differs from the churches treated in the previous chapters in that it is not a denomination as such, but rather an association within one. For this reason, the data collection process differed (see chapter 3), but I still believe that the data presented here give a fairly accurate representation of the actual situation.

## 23.1. The distribution of members of the GB in the Netherlands

### 23.1.1. The national distribution

First of all, we will look at the way the GB is spread out over the Netherlands, using maps showing the percentage of inhabitants in each Dutch municipality who belong to the GB. The darker the colour, the higher the share of GB members. The first map shows the data for 1975, one of the first years for which data were collected, the second shows the situation in 1989, when GB membership numbers were at their peak, and the final map shows 2015, as the final year of data collection for this study.





Figure 23.1. The distribution of the GB in the Netherlands

From the maps, it immediately becomes clear that the spread of the GB is a lot like that of the GG, GGN, and HHK, with a pronounced presence in the Bible belt. Unlike the latter denominations, however, the GB does also show a small number of members in Groningen and Friesland. Since the GB was a part of the NHK and, later, the PKN, which has a presence in most of the country, it has a good opportunity to gain members easily outside the region of its highest concentration. On the first two maps, the GB shows the greatest presence in the area around Gouda and Bodegraven, as well as in the Veluwe, from Ede and Apeldoorn to Staphorst and Zwartewaterland, but it also had many members in Zeeland, around Rotterdam, and in the Noordoostpolder. The maps reflect very few changes between 1975 and 1989, but the changes we do see mostly show growth in the northern provinces. The difference between 1989 and 2015 is much larger. As we saw in chapter 13, the overall membership of the GB suffered a drastic decline after 2004, and this can be seen in all regions.

#### *23.1.2. The distribution over the provinces*

The percentage of *Bonders* as a part of the Dutch population per province will give us a more detailed picture of the distribution of the GB:



Figure 23.2. The share of *Bonders* per province

As the maps above already indicated, the largest percentage of *Bonders* could be found in Gelderland, Utrecht, and Zuid-Holland, with two clear concentrations around Gouda/Rotterdam and in the Veluwe. Even though 1989 was the peak year, not all provinces showed higher percentages. The growth was mostly concentrated in the north, where Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe all grew, and the GB population more than doubled in size in comparison with the Dutch population. Two other provinces, Overijssel and Zuid-Holland, showed very small growth. All other provinces were already shrinking by 1989. The decline is much more visible in the period from 1989 to 2015, during which GB numbers underwent a free fall. By 2015, the northern provinces had also shrunk back to their 1975 values or even dropped below them. The provinces with the highest GB percentages were now Gelderland, Overijssel, Utrecht, Zuid-Holland, and Zeeland. The difference in percentage between Zeeland and the other three provinces had grown to be much smaller than in earlier years, due for the most part to the lower level of decline in Zeeland.

An additional statistic to present concerns the provinces as a percentage of total GB membership. This gives us an indication of the distribution within the GB itself, instead of relative to the Dutch population:



Figure 23.3. The distribution of Bonders over the provinces

Clearly, the largest share of *Bonders* live in Zuid-Holland, constituting almost 40% of the total membership. The size of the GB presence there was less noticeable in the earlier representation because the general Dutch population in Zuid-Holland is very large, such that the GB was less visible there as a percentage of the provincial population. The second province, with around 25% of all *Bonders*, is Gelderland, followed by Utrecht, which nevertheless shows a gradual decline over the years from 15% to 12%. Overijssel's share, on the other hand, grew from 8% to 12%. Noord-Brabant is the largest among the remaining provinces, and its share grew somewhat from 3% to 4.5%. All the other provinces, including Zeeland, only housed between 1% and 2% of the GB population.

## 23.1.3. The distribution over the municipalities

The final level of GB distribution we will examine is that of the municipalities. This section includes two tables; the first shows the municipalities with the largest absolute numbers of *Bonders*, and the second the municipalities with the highest relative numbers:
1975		1989		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Rotterdam	32,413	Ede	26,544	Katwijk	17,106
Ede	25,215	Katwijk	19,551	Ede	15,304
Barneveld	18,308	Barneveld	18,716	Veenendaal	10,510
Veenendaal	16,961	Veenendaal	17,075	Barneveld	10,494
Nijkerk	12,272	Rotterdam	14,931	Rijssen-Holten	8,607
Putten	12,000	Nijkerk	12,341	Twenterand	8,324
Katwijk	11,750	Rijssen-Hol- ten	10,617	Oldebroek	6,770
Huizen	11,000	Oldebroek	10,358	Putten	6,585
Hardinxveld- Giessendam	10,120	Huizen	10,313	Harderwijk	6,002
Vlaardingen	10,000	Hoogeveen	10,065	Kampen	5,530

Table 23.1. Top 10 municipalities with the largest number of Bonders

Here we recognise the patterns we already observed on the maps. In 1975, Rotterdam shows by far the highest number of GB members, followed by the familiar Gelderland cluster in Ede. Barneveld, and Veenendaal, and then a number of municipalities in the Veluwe (Nijkerk and Putten). Hardinxveld-Giessendam and Vlaardingen are both municipalities near Rotterdam. Katwijk is another place that has a large and well-known experientialist population, while Huizen is located in Noord-Holland, south of Flevoland, near Bunschoten. By 1989, not much had changed, although Rotterdam had shrunk significantly, while both Katwijk and Ede showed growth. A few municipalities further in the east (Oldebroek and Rijssen-Holten) and in the north (Hoogeveen) replaced Putten, Hardinxveld-Giessendam, and Vlaardingen, showing a slight shift from west to east. This pattern continues on the list for 2015, where the first four municipalities are still the same, albeit in a slightly different order. However, Rotterdam, Nijkerk, Huizen, and Hoogeveen have disappeared and been replaced by Twenterand (with five congregations, four of which had thousands of members), Harderwijk, Putten (which returned from 1975), and Kampen. By 2015, then, Katwijk was the only remaining municipality in the west. Almost all of the municipalities listed for 2015 are in the Veluwe or in the Vechtdal. Rijssen, Barneveld, Veenendaal, and Katwijk all have large experientialist populations, as we saw in chapters 20-22.

When the municipalities are listed according to the highest relative number of *Bonders*, the following lists emerge:

1989

Municipality	Share	Municipality	Share	Municipality	Shar e
Zederik	77%	Goedereede	75%	Graafstroom	43%
Goedereede	77%	Graafstroom	72%	Liesveld	37%
Graafstroom	71%	Zederik	68%	Giessenlanden	36%
Ouderkerk	68%	Ouderkerk	66%	Zederik	36%
Putten	68%	Liesveld	64%	Aalburg	33%
Hardinxveld- Giessendam	66%	Aalburg	62%	Renswoude	32%
Liesveld	65%	Renswoude	61%	Oldebroek	29%
Middelharnis	61%	Middelharnis	59%	Ouderkerk	28%
Aalburg	56%	Hardinxveld-Gies- sendam	57%	Putten	27%
Nieuw- Lekkerland	55%	Cromstrijen	55%	Katwijk	27%

Table 23.2. To	n 10 munic	inalities with	the highes	t share of i	members
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Of all the municipalities mentioned in table 23.2, Hardinxveld-Giessendam, Putten, and Katwijk are the only ones to appear also on the lists in table 23.1. All of the others are new, and are municipalities with small populations but large GB communities. The largest of them, Zederik, included six congregations with GB ministers, and all of these congregations had close to or over 1,000 members in a total Dutch population of barely 11,000. Similar situations apply in all of the other municipalities on the list for 1975, with the exception of Putten, which had one congregation with 12,000 Bonders in a Dutch population of almost 18,000. Eight of the municipalities listed for 1975 are located in Zuid-Holland. and the remaining two are in Gelderland and Noord-Brabant. In 1989, the list still featured eight municipalities in Zuid-Holland, along with one in Noord-Brabant and one in Utrecht. Most of the municipalities on this list also had multiple GB congregations, which together had up to 8,000 members, all with populations totalling between 10,000 and 16,000 inhabitants. Renswoude is an exception here, as it had one congregation of 2,300 members, but the total population was 3,700, explaining the high percentage. By 2015, only six of the top ten municipalities with the highest percentage of *Bonders* were in Zuid-Holland. The others were in Utrecht and Gelderland. Again, all of the municipalities in Gelderland and Utrecht had as many as six GB congregations with thousands of members in small municipalities. Once more, exceptions are formed by Renswoude and Putten, each having a single large congregation.

#### 23.1.4. Urbanisation of the GB

As the above section clearly indicated, the size of the Dutch population in a municipality largely determines the choice of the municipalities that appear on the lists showing the highest absolute number of *Bonders* and the lists with the highest relative number of *Bonders*. When overall population size was not taken into account, as in table 23.1, the largest GB congregations were shown to be in Gelderland surrounding Ede and in the Veluwe. Looking at the relative numbers, however, we saw that the GB had the greatest presence in small municipalities. This trend finds confirmation in the statistics for the degree of urbanisation in the GB:



Figure 23.4. The development of the GB and degree of urbanisation

Here we can see that by far the greatest majority of *Bonders* were found in slightly urbanised places, like Hardinxveld-Giessendam, Oldebroek, and Putten. In fact, figure 23.5 below shows that no less than roughly 35% of them live in areas of slight urbanisation. Next in line are moderately urbanised places (on average 24%), then highly urbanised places (21%) and rural places (18%). In the earlier years for which data were collected, there was also a fair percentage (8%) of GB members in the G4, probably due in large part to the large GB population in Rotterdam, which soon declined and by 2015 represented around only 3% of all *Bonders*.



Figure 23.5. Bonders in different areas of urbanisation

The GB, therefore, more than most denominations discussed before, is situated in places of slight urbanisation. As such, it closely resembles the GGN, where a similar pattern was observed.

# 23.2. The distribution of the growth

Apart from the distribution of members, we can look at the distribution of GB growth. This is shown in the two maps below, the first of which details the period stretching from the beginning of data collection to the peak year, when the Bond as a whole was still growing, and the second the period between the peak and 2015, including the rapid decline around 2004.



Figure 23.6. The geographical distribution of the annual growth of the GB

As we saw before, the period leading up to the peak was not one of pure growth. There were many municipalities where the GB was in fact shrinking. Most growth was situated in the large GB patch around Gouda and in the area of Barneveld, Ede, and Apeldoorn. Apart from these regions, there was also growth in a number of isolated municipalities, like Dantumadeel, Hoogeveen, Twenterand, Hellendoorn, and Rijssen-Holten. After the peak, substantial growth still took place in Schouwen-Duiveland, Nieuwkoop, Ommen, Geldermalsen, and Hattem, and a small increase in Dirksland and Wierden, but the other 109 municipalities with GB congregations had declining membership numbers.

## 23.3. Segregation

Since we know that there are several large clusters of *Bonders*, but also congregations in isolated areas, it is interesting to determine how segregated the *Bonders* really are. The first measure for this is the dissimilarity index, which measures the percentage of *Bonders* who would have to move in order to attain an even distribution over the Netherlands, with a value of 1 indicating perfect segregation and 0 perfect integration. The GB stayed at around 71% until 2003, after which the index suddenly increased to 76%. This still indicates a fairly well integrated whole. Since the GB is so large and had congregations in the north of the Netherlands as well as all over the Bible belt, the segregation according to the dissimilarity index is not at all that high a level. In fact, by this measure, the GB is the least segregated among all experientialist churches.



Figure 23.7. The dissimilarity and exposure indices for the GB

The second measure, the exposure index, measures the chance of a GB member meeting a non-member in the member's place of residence. Here, 0 means total segregation and 1 implies total integration. For the GB, the value for the exposure index starts at 70%, and, beginning in 1989, it gradually rises to 85%. This rise is probably closely related to the decline in GB membership numbers starting after the peak year of 1989. The GB in fact has the lowest exposure index value of all denominations discussed in this study, indicating that the GB from this angle really is highly segregated. The exposure index values are probably due to the GB's strong presence in slightly urbanised places; in places where GB members make up 77% of the population, like Zederik in 1975, the chance of meeting a non-member is rather slim. As such situations, with large GB congregations in small municipalities, seem to be typical for the GB, they are definitely of influence on their level of segregation.

# 23.4. Conclusions

In this chapter, we saw that the GB for the most part shows a typically experientialist distribution over the Netherlands. The majority of its members were found in the Bible belt, with a large concentration of members around Gouda and Rotterdam and another one in the Veluwe. As GB membership declined, however, the congregations in the west started to shrink more than those in the east, shifting the GB's centre of gravity from Rotterdam towards the Veluwe and large parts of Overijssel. Unlike the experientialist denominations (i.e., the GG, GGN, and HHK), the GB also has a fair share of members in the north of the country, whose numbers actually increased significantly until the GB peak. This seemed a promising trend, but it suddenly broke after 1989, and in later years the GB once again became a very small presence in the north. The GB does resemble the experientialist denominations in terms of urbanisation. Its largest share of members were in slightly urbanised places, and they were largely absent from the G4 and other large cities. However, since the GB had larger congregations than the GG, GGN, and HHK, there were many small municipalities with extremely high levels of *Bonders*.

# 24. Conclusions

Having described each of the denominations in detail, we now turn to compare them, also to the Dutch population, so as to reach representative conclusions regarding the geographic distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands. Some of these conclusions will give rise to further questions, which we will go on to discuss in greater detail in part IV.

# 24.1. The geographical distribution of the churches

Each chapter first discussed the distribution of the members of the denominations in the Netherlands on three levels: nationally, in the provinces, and in the municipalities. In this chapter, these analyses will be compared.

### 24.1.1. The national distribution

The maps in figure 24.1 show the combined distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, with and without the GKN and GB, whose combined membership is so large that it clutters the data.





Figure 24.1. The distribution of Reformed churches in the Netherlands combined in shares of the Dutch population

The first detail of note is that the maps show a fair number of municipalities that have no Reformed church at all. Most of them are situated in the east of Noord-Brabant and Limburg, the middle of Noord-Holland, and parts of Twente. Noord-Brabant, Limburg, and Twente are predominantly Catholic, dividing the country neatly in two. This pattern is a remnant of the time when the southern parts of the Netherlands were occupied by the Spanish during the Eighty Years' War. As shown in chapter 2, Noord-Brabant and Limburg are 48 and 64% Roman Catholic, respectively, with between 0% and 1% for the Reformed churches (CBS, 2016).

Other places on the map do have large concentrations of Reformed members. Zeeland was densely populated with Reformed people in every year presented above, as was Rotterdam and the area around Apeldoorn, Ede, and Barneveld. These are all typical Bible belt places, the strip of land in the Netherlands where the highest number of experientialist churches are found. In addition, Reformed churches are also well represented in the north, especially Friesland. If the GKN are left out of the equation, however, this concentration becomes weaker, since these churches in particular had a very large presence there. Gelderland and Overijssel showed significant growth, with a whole area stretching from Ede up to Steenwijkerland that has large concentrations of Reformed people. Flevoland also attained high numbers, but Amsterdam underwent a drastic decline.

As detailed in the introduction to part III, the Dutch population has a different distribution. The Randstad is most densely populated, in departure from the pattern that emerges from the maps showing the distribution of Reformed membership. Noord-Brabant, too, numbers among the most populated provinces in the Netherlands, as some of the largest cities are located there, while Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and Zeeland are more sparsely populated than the high numbers of Reformed people there would suggest. The same goes for Overijssel. Gelderland is quite densely populated, but again, the number of Reformed people in Barneveld, Ede, and Apeldoorn are relatively high.

A different way of comparing the distribution of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands is by showing the largest denomination in each municipality, based on membership as a percentage of the total population.



Figure 24.2. The largest church in each municipality in 1955-2015

The GKN and GB have been left off the map with the largest churches for 1955 and 2015, as there were very few municipalities in which the GKN did not represent the largest denomination. For that reason, the 1955 map only includes four options: the CGK, GKv, GG, and GGN. The map shows the CGK and GG and GGN to have been very much intertwined in the Bible belt, but even the GKv is present there, especially in Kampen and surrounding municipalities. In Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland, the CGK and GKv alone figure among the largest churches, but it is the GKv that dominate there, as they do in Noord-Holland. In the south of North Holland, the CGK show the largest presence, in municipalities like Haarlemmermeer and Gooi.

By 2015, also the NGK and HHK had been established, and for that reason they too are included among the options on the map. The Bible belt shows a mixture of GG, GGN, and HHK churches, although the CGK and GKv also figure in a number of municipalities. The GG have the largest presence in the Bible belt, dominating most of the strip of land from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen to Staphorst. It is interesting that Staphorst is often identified as the northern tip of the Bible belt, since the HHK is the only experiential church in the Kampen dataset that had a congregation there in 2015. The GKv dominates all municipalities in Flevoland, with the exception of Urk, and most of Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe. The NGK too appear as the largest denomination in some places, most notably in Noord-Holland, two municipalities in Friesland (Heerenveen and Wolvega), northwest Overijssel, and in Houten. The CGK share the area of the GKv and NGK, with municipalities in Noord-Holland, Groningen, and Friesland, but they are not large enough to represent the largest denomination in any municipality of the Bible belt.

#### 24.1.2. The distribution over the provinces

Next, the distribution of the churches over the provinces can be explored. The first statistic, which is presented in figure 24.3, concerns the share of the Dutch population constituted by the combined total membership of the various Reformed denominations. It should be noted that, since the GKN merged with the NHK and ELK in 2004, it is no longer present in the graph for 2015, resulting in the rather significant decreases between the years 1955 and 2015. Moreover, the year 1900 has not been included because the GKN was the only denomination of our dataset existing at that time.



Figure 24.3. The percentage of each province made up of members of all Reformed churches combined, including the GKN

When the GKN numbers are included, the first notable detail is that the provinces of Groningen and Friesland had the largest percentage of Reformed people in 1955, due to the combined presence of GKN, CGK and GKv churches there. As we have seen, all of these denominations were well represented in those provinces. These two northern provinces are followed by Zeeland, where the GG and GGN predominated, even though the GKN and GKv also had a fair amount of members there. Drenthe, Overijssel, Utrecht, and Zuid-Holland all show average shares of Reformed members for 1955. On the other hand, Gelderland, Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and Noord-Holland only had a sparse Reformed population.

In 2003, the distribution remained largely the same, although the percentage of all shares had dropped. Gelderland is the only province to have remained at the same level. Flevoland obviously shows significant growth, since it did not exist in 1955. Overall, the greatest declines show in Groningen, Noord-Holland, and Zuid-Holland. Limburg always had few Reformed churches.



Figure 24.4. The percentage of each province made up of members of all Reformed churches combined, excluding the GKN

When the GKN are excluded from the data, the resulting image is somewhat different. Zeeland now shows to have the highest share of members in the population, dominated by the experientialist churches. Overijssel, Utrecht, and Gelderland are next in order, and Groningen appears higher on the list than Friesland as a result of the *Vrijmaking*. Again, by 2015, almost all shares show a decrease. Drenthe is the only province to reflect growth, as the number of church members remained stable, but the overall Dutch population there grew much less than it did in the rest of the country. Zeeland remained stable at 10%; Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and Noord-Holland show an almost imperceptible membership by now, while Flevoland emerged with 5%.

Another way of looking at the distribution over the provinces is by mapping the combined percentage of members from all Reformed churches by province, as shown in figure 24.5:



Figure 24.5. The distribution of the Reformed people in the Netherlands over the provinces

Figure 24.5 likewise clearly reflects the disbanding of the GKN. The most salient detail here is that the group of Reformed people living in Friesland disappeared almost completely, falling from 11% in 2003 to 4% in 2004. Groningen went through a similar development, starting at 6% in 1900 and ending with 3.5% in 2015. Drenthe and Overijssel both stayed stable, at 3% and 6%, respectively. Gelderland showed a relative increase over time, as did Utrecht, Zeeland, and Noord-Brabant. Zuid-Holland, which started out as the largest Reformed province in relative terms, shows a gradual decrease from the 1940s onwards, as does Noord-Holland. Limburg and Flevoland are almost invisible, although Flevoland did rise to almost 2.5% in 2015, after starting out at 0.1% in 1975.

#### 24.1.3. The distribution over the municipalities

By zooming in closer, we can describe the municipalities with the most Reformed members. The two lists below present the municipalities with the highest absolute and relative membership numbers for all Reformed churches combined, including the GKN.

1955		2003		2015	
Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total	Municipality	Total
Rotterdam	58,707	Ede	36,178	Ede	25,958
The Hague	39,360	Katwijk	35,413	Barneveld	24,313
Amsterdam	36,711	Barneveld	35,203	Katwijk	21,143
Groningen	21,529	Rotterdam	27,370	Veenendaal	19,516
Utrecht	16,888	Veenendaal	26,459	Rijssen-Holten	16,554
Zuidwest-Friesland	13,918	Hardenberg	20,833	Neder-Betuwe	12,721
Leeuwarden	12,810	Hoogeveen	20,496	Kampen	12,559
Hardenberg	12,793	Rijssen-Holten	19,875	Nunspeet	11,511
Barneveld	11,008	Kampen	18,412	Urk	11,511
Dongeradeel	10,745	Zaltbommel	16,676	Zwolle	10,864

Table 24.1. Top ten municipalities with the largest number of Reformed members

Table 24.1 shows the municipalities with the highest absolute numbers of Reformed people. In 1955, the five municipalities with the most Reformed people also numbered among the ten largest municipalities in the Netherlands. Of the remaining five municipalities, three are in Friesland. The remaining two are municipalities that we have encountered many times before in this study as municipalities with many Reformed members: Hardenberg and Barneveld. By 2003, the large cities have all but disappeared, with Rotterdam as the only remaining G4 city. Their places have largely been taken by municipalities from the Bible belt, and one in Drenthe. It is also worth noting that the membership numbers for the largest municipalities on the respective lists declined drastically. Where in 1955 the largest municipality still had almost 60.000 Reformed people, the top municipality for 2003 only had around 36.000. By 2015, the municipality at the top of the list had 26.000 members. The newcomers on this final list are Neder-Betuwe, Nunspeet, Urk, and Zwolle, reflecting the influence of the Bible belt, as all municipalities listed for 2015 are located there. All municipalities on this list are municipalities that either have a very large church from a single denomination (e.g., Neder-Betuwe, which has a very large GGN church) or a collection of different churches with many members (like Zwolle, which has five GKv churches with 6.000 members combined, one CGK with 3.500 members, two NGK churches, and a GG).

The lists change when municipalities are ordered by relative membership numbers:

1955		2003		2015	
Municipality	%	Municipality	%	Municipality	%
Bunschoten	91%	Bunschoten	79%	Urk	58%
Urk	84%	Aalburg	76%	Neder-Betuwe	56%
Bedum	55%	Urk	76%	Staphorst	56%
Ferwerderadeel	52%	Barneveld	71%	Bunschoten	53%
Barneveld	52%	Graafstroom	70%	Aalburg	52%
Grootegast	48%	Goedereede	68%	Liesveld	51%
Dongeradeel	45%	Liesveld	68%	Goedereede	50%
Kollumerland en Nieuwkruisland	45%	Zederik	67%	Ouderkerk	50%
Winsum	43%	Hardinxveld- Giessendam	66%	Zederik	49%
Zuidhorn	43%	Zaltbommel	64%	Zwartewaterland	47%

Table 24.2. Top ten municipalities with the largest share of Reformed members

The municipalities showing the highest percentages of the population constituted by Reformed people are different from the municipalities with the highest absolute numbers. For 1955, Barneveld is the only municipality to appear on both lists. Together with Bunschoten and Urk, it is one of the most well-known Reformed municipalities in the Netherlands. The remaining seven municipalities listed for 1955 are all found in Groningen and Friesland, with low population densities, showing the preference of Reformed people for a slightly urbanised environment. By 2003, the overall pattern has changed quite significantly. Due to the decline of the GKN, the places in the north had all disappeared. Instead, the largest numbers now belong to the GB, such that most of the municipalities on this second list had high GB membership numbers. By 2015, very little had changed. In spite of changes in place names, the list still shows typically Reformed municipalities (Urk, Staphorst, Bunschoten), all found in the Bible belt.

#### 24.1.4. The degree of urbanisation

As the previous section showed, there was a time when the Reformed denominations had a presence in large cities and in areas with a low population density. The next several figures show how the Reformed denominations were spread out over areas with different degrees of urbanisation, and how this compares to the distribution of the Dutch population.



Figure 24.6. The percentage of the Dutch population and the Reformed denominations in the G4

The first figure shows the percentage of each denomination's membership and of the Dutch population living in the G4 (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht). By 1915, almost 25% of the Dutch population lived there, but the 1960s saw a general movement away from the G4. This same movement is visible for almost all churches in the dataset, with the exception of the GGN, which has never had a presence in the four largest Dutch cities and whose gradual decline in figure 24.6 does not seem to be related to general developments in the Dutch population. Apart from the GGN, then, almost all of the denominations started out with between around 10% and 20% of their population in areas with the highest level of urbanisation, but by 2015 all ended up around 5%. The lowest shares occur for the GG, GGN, and HHK.



Figure 24.7. The percentage of the Dutch population and the Reformed denominations in highly urbanised areas

Highly urbanised areas are municipalities like Nijmegen, Zwolle, and Alkmaar. The Dutch population there started out with numbers similar to the G4, with around 25% in 1900, but that percentage increased very gradually until almost 35% of the population resided in highly urbanised places in 2015. The GKN followed the trend of the Dutch population very closely, although their percentages were a little lower and membership started declining there around 1971. when people moved to other places or left the church altogether. The CGK had the highest initial percentage of members in highly urbanised areas, with almost 45% of their membership, followed by a decrease, a slight increase, and then another drop, until they were left with just over 35% in highly urbanised areas, which nevertheless remains a very high percentage. The share of the GKv gradually dropped from 35% to 25%. The NGK, however, had a high relative number of members in highly urbanised areas. The GG also show a slightly increasing percentage, but the share in the GGN dropped sharply in 1981. As chapter 21 showed, however, this drop is mostly accounted for by two very large churches that joined the schism that year, amounting to a loss of over 2.000 members in highly urbanised areas, explaining the anomalous development of the numbers. The HHK shows only 10% of its members in highly urbanised areas. The GB started out similar to the GGN, but then experienced growth instead of decline, and stayed at a stable 25%.



Figure 24.8. The percentage of the Dutch population and of the Reformed denominations in moderately urbanised areas

Figure 24.8 presents the share of the denominations in moderately urbanised areas. These are municipalities like Goes, Zutphen, and Culemborg. The Dutch population here was never large, but the relative numbers did increase from 15% in 1900 to 20% in 2015. Almost all denominations, however, have higher numbers. The GKN started out with percentages very similar to that of the Dutch population, but then started growing faster in 1971, when, as we saw, their membership shifted away from the highly urban areas. The GB follows a very similar development. The CGK and GGN both started out with a lot of members in moderately urbanised areas, but these numbers dropped as members moved away or left the church. The GGN stayed small in moderately urbanised areas, but the CGK increased beginning in 1975. The GKv and GG follow patterns similar to the GKN, with percentages somewhat higher than, but still paralleling, the Dutch population. The HHK also shows the same percentage as the Dutch population in moderately urbanised areas, with almost 20% between 2010 and 2015. The NGK had a remarkably high percentage of members in moderately urbanised areas, consistently in the neighbourhood of 35%.



Figure 24.9. The percentage of the Dutch population and of the Reformed denominations in slightly urbanised areas

The next degree of urbanisation are the slightly urbanised areas, among them Leek, Loon op Zand, and Scherpenzeel. The share of the Dutch population there is small, around 15%. All churches show higher membership shares, most of them starting at around 20%, with a slight increase from the 1970s onwards up to 25%. The GGN show the largest presence in slightly urbanised areas, with almost 40% of their members there.



Figure 24.10. The percentage of the Dutch population and of the Reformed denominations in non-urbanised areas

Finally, we turn to the rural areas, like Schiermonnikoog, Dalfsen, and Dirksland. The share of the Dutch population there is consistently low, starting at 12% and dropping a little to 10%. The NGK are alone in having a lower percentage here than the average population does. The CGK closely followed the Dutch population, staying a few percent higher. The GKN and GKv both hover around 20%, with some fluctuation over the years. The highest portion of denominational membership can be detected for the GG and GGN, which have between 25% and 30% of their membership in rural places.

## 24.2. The distribution of the growth

This section will describe the growth of the denominations. As we know from the earlier chapters, some denominations were still growing by 2015, while others were on the decline. Figure 24.11 below shows the growth of all Reformed denominations combined for three periods: from the beginning of the dataset to our halfway point of 1955; from 1955 to 2000; and, finally, from 2003 to 2015, the GKN excluded.



Figure 24.11. The growth of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands

These maps show a consistent pattern of decreasing growth over the years. For the first period, from 1900-1955, most places show an increase in Reformed membership numbers. There are only a handful of municipalities that show a decrease, but most places grew by between 0 and 5%.

Growth could still be detected between 1956 and 2000, with new churches being established in Flevoland. However, at the edges of the country, decline was already setting in; northern Groningen and Friesland, the eastern edges of Groningen and Drenthe, the north of Noord-Holland, the coastline, and southern parts of Zeeland were all losing members at a rate of 0-5% per year.

The final period still shows areas of growth, especially in municipalities in Gelderland, Flevoland, and the parts of Utrecht and Zuid-Holland that belong to the Bible belt. Overijssel, Drenthe and Groningen also showed patches of growth, but most of Friesland, Noord-Holland, and Zeeland had declining numbers. As the introduction to part III showed, these areas also happen to be the areas where the Dutch population as a whole was decreasing, so in a sense, the Reformed churches just follow the Dutch pattern. However, the decrease in the churches shows itself to have been much more widespread than it was for the Dutch population as a whole.

## 24.3. Segregation

As a final analysis, the segregation of the denominations has been calculated using two different methods of measurement. The dissimilarity index shows the percentage of people that would have to change location in order to attain an even distribution of the minority group within the majority population. A value of zero means perfect integration, and a value of one total segregation. The exposure index shows the chance that a member of the minority group will meet a non-member in that member's municipality, with a value of one indicating total segregation and zero a position in the middle of the majority group.



Figure 24.13. The dissimilarity index for all Reformed churches

Figure 24.13 shows the dissimilarity index for all Reformed denominations, both individually and combined. This graph indicates that the GKN were the most integrated. The maps in chapter 16 likewise showed a very even GKN spread in the Netherlands. What probably prevented the dissimilarity value from being even lower is the absence of GKN churches in eastern Noord-Brabant and Limburg. The GKN are followed by the CGK after 1950, and then the GKv and the NGK. The experientialist churches all show higher values on the dissimilarity index, reflecting a more segregated distribution. Sheer size is therefore no guarantee for a lower level of segregation, as the GG are larger than both the NGK and the CGK, but still have a higher dissimilarity value.



Figure 24.13. The exposure index for all Reformed churches

Finally, the exposure index shows values that are all close to one. All denominations combined show a value of 0.7 at the time when they all coexist. With the exception of the GB, however, no single denomination has a value below 0.8, meaning that they truly are minority groups. Every Reformed church member therefore lives in a neighbourhood whose population is largely composed of people who are not members of the same denomination. According to this index, GKN members have the highest chance of meeting members of their own group, followed by the HHK and the GG. The GKv is somewhat segregated according to this measure, but the GGN, NGK, and CGK have higher values. The NGK and GGN denominations are so small that their members have a lower chance of meeting members of their group in their neighbourhood, but the CGK make up a larger denomination, meaning it does not cluster as much as the other denominations do. The relatively low values for the CGK on the dissimilarity index supports this assumption.

# 24.4. Conclusions

Having discussed the geographical distribution of each denomination and compared that distribution both among the denominations themselves and to the general Dutch population, there are several conclusions that can be drawn.

- 1. Reformed denominations could be found everywhere in the Netherlands, with the exception of most parts of eastern Noord-Brabant, Limburg, and northern parts of Noord-Holland.
- 2. Orthodox denominations were most highly represented in Zuid-Holland, Utrecht, Flevoland, Gelderland, Overijssel, Drenthe, Groningen, and Friesland. They were largely absent from Zeeland, Noord-Holland, Noord-Brabant, and Limburg.
- 3. Experientialist denominations had the strongest presence in Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, parts of northwest Noord-Brabant between Werkendam and Sprang-Capelle, Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijssel. They were almost entirely absent from the northern provinces, Noord-Holland, the majority of Noord-Brabant, and Limburg.
- 4. Reformed denominations used to have a significant presence in larger cities, but their members moved from there to less urban areas, following the general Dutch development. However, their shares in urbanised places were smaller than the share of the general Dutch population, and larger in less urbanised places.
- 5. When the larger churches moved away from highly urbanised areas, they all moved to less urbanised places. These were usually places with more than one denomination. There were fewer places with churches of a single denomination than places with multiple denominations. In places showing the presence of only a single denomination, that denomination usually was the GKN, simply because it was bigger than most other denominations.
- 6. The growth of the denominations declined through the years, often in border areas such as Groningen, the edges of Friesland, and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Areas of growth were places well-known for their Reformed identity.
- 7. The GG, GGN, and HHK were most segregated of all denominations. The GKN were least segregated, followed by the CGK, GKv, and NGK.

In short, the distribution of the Reformed denominations followed set patterns. There are places that were typically Reformed and places that were typically non-Reformed. The experientialist and orthodox denominations showed themselves to be dominant in different parts of the country, both showing a very specific and clearly recognisable pattern of distribution. A notable example is the Dutch Bible belt, the strip of land between Walcheren and Staphorst, where experientialist denominations represent a notable minority. Churches once had a presence in larger cities and in more highly urbanised areas, but then left them and came to be mostly present in less urbanised areas, in relative terms even more so than the Dutch population. When denominations shrank, many congregations were closed due to a declining membership. The churches that did stay open and still had an involved group of members could often be found in the Bible belt. The growth of these healthy congregations generally showed itself to be more persistent there than it was for churches in other places, in particular when the municipalities of those thriving churches also had churches from other denominations.

Part IV Possible explanations for the spatio-temporal developments in the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands

# 25. Introduction to part IV

The final part of this study will attempt to answer the final sub-question posed back in chapter 1: How can the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 be explained? Parts II and III offered an elaborate description of the temporal and spatial developments in the Kampen dataset. The conclusions can be found by revisiting chapters 14 and 23. Most of those conclusions are fairly self-explanatory or have already been explained in sufficient detail there, but several questions also demanded further attention. These are the following questions:

From part II:

- 1. Do all denominations go through the same development in terms of membership numbers?
- 2. Do orthodox denominations and experientialist denominations show different developments?

From part III:

- 3. Do congregations in rural areas show a more persistent growth than congregations in the city?
- 4. Is the growth of local congregations affected by the presence of congregations from other denominations?
- 5. Does the Bible belt exist, and what influence does it have on the growth of experientialist and orthodox denominations?
- 6. Does the presence of denominational schools influence the growth of Reformed congregations?

Each of these questions will be discussed in a chapter of its own to create a deeper level of understanding of the phenomena observed earlier in this work. A final chapter will be dedicated to summarising the findings.

But since this part of our study will address the reasons for the growth of the Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset, a few notes first need to be made. They concern the growth in the Reformed denominations and in the Dutch population. These growth levels seem to be fairly unrelated, as figure 25.1 below indicates:



Figure 25.1. The growth of the Dutch population and the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, with the first year of reliable data collection as 1

As noted in part II, chapter 14, the Dutch population continued its growth over the years, in an uninterrupted upwards line. The denominations in the Kampen dataset do not show the same pattern. In some of them, the development first paralleled the growth in the Dutch population; this was true for the GKN, GKv, GG, and GGN, for instance. The initial growth of the CGK was even stronger than that of the Dutch population. Sooner or later, however, the growth in almost all of the denominations dropped off, much more than in the general Dutch population, or the growth stopped altogether.

This is interesting, since the reason for the lack of growth in the denominations is not directly clear. Thus, chapter 14 showed that the birth rates in all denominations, with the one exception of the GKN, were higher than they were in the overall Dutch population, indicating a higher level of natural internal growth. If this were to be the only source of increase, the denominations would have grown faster than the general population. However, the CBS (2019a) also shows that the growth of the Dutch population is largely due to immigration and not a matter of birth surplus. As the CBS information (2018b) shows, immigrants made up 20% of the Dutch population in 1996. The immigrant rate kept rising, and by 2018 it was at 30%:



Figure 25.2. The percentage of immigrants in the Netherlands (CBS, 2018b)

Earlier findings in my research (paragraph 14.3) have pointed out that the Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset did not grow due to an external influx. In other words, these churches were not recruiting members from outside their own group. The external growth ensuring the continuing growth of the Dutch population in the absence of high birth rates (i.e., immigration) was therefore absent from the Reformed denominations. In addition to decreasing birth rates and a lack of immigrants, denominations were also losing members who either went to other denominations or left the church altogether. This means that the Reformed denominations were not just failing to recruit new members, but they were also losing existing members. For that reason, their numbers developed independently of the overall population, as the factors influencing growth differed.

In addition, the Reformed denominations also differ from non-Reformed denominations. As figure 25.3, also presented in chapter 2, shows, the Roman Catholic Church and the *Hervormde* church both developed differently compared to the *Gereformeerde* denominations. Where the latter generally show an initial increase with a peak, a subsequent flattening of the growth, and an eventual decline, the Roman Catholic Church and the *Hervormde* church both started out with a fairly large share of the Dutch population: the Catholics made up almost 40% of the population, and the NHK nearly 60%:



Figure 25.3. All churches as % of the Dutch population (CBS, 2016)

As non-religiosity started to increase, the Roman Catholic Church and the NHK began losing members. The former did not start declining until 1980, but the latter began a long free fall in 1880, when the *Gereformeerde* denominations, which up to that time had only represented 1% of the population, started to take off and soon grew to 10%. This lasted until 1980, when also the *Gereformeerde* churches started to shrink. It is therefore interesting to note that the *Gereformeerde* denominations not only developed independently of the Dutch population, but also independently of other types of churches. The remainder of this dissertation will delve deeper into explanations for these deviations, and hopefully provide some answers to questions concerning their statistical peculiarities.

# 26. The similar development of Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset

Conclusions drawn earlier in this work have shown that most denominations in the Kampen dataset passed through varying historical and statistical developments, but, as established in the conclusions to part II, still witness a notable similarity in the way membership numbers developed. Most denominations showed an initial period of growth after their establishment or at the beginning of data collection, followed by a peak, after which they showed a largely stable membership for some time, before starting to decrease.

This chapter will delve further into this development, which will be examined by a comparison with findings in literature to test the hypothesis that the development of membership numbers in different denominations is similar enough to be of note. As established in the previous chapter, the denominations in the Kampen dataset do not follow the development of the overall Dutch population or of other types of churches. For this reason, this chapter and the next will describe the development and explore possible explanations like the acceptance of contraception and the difference between orthodox and experientialist denominations.

## 26.1. Reasons to assume a similar development

In the first part of this chapter, I will present information from literature in support of the hypothesis that denominations go through a similar development.

## 26.1.1. A similar nature

Gerard Dekker (2013) was the first to propose the hypothesis that the GKv followed the same statistical and cultural development as the GKN. After placing the development of the GKN and the GKv on a graph with a thirty-year delay, he came with the following presentation, which I have recreated with additional information from the Kampen dataset:



Figure 26.1. The similarities between the development of membership in the GKN and GKv according to Dekker (2013, p. 34)

Dekker's hypothesis is that the GKv follow closely in the footsteps of the GKN with a thirty-year delay because the denominations are similar in nature and went through the same historical and cultural changes. He typifies both denominations as modern orthodox denominations that are focused on the world. As such, in order to be of meaning in wider society, they had to change with it. Both denominations emerged in resistance to a course they perceived as wrong, after which they gradually mitigated their own teachings more and more so as to start resembling the denomination they had left (2013, p. 117-118). Dekker argues that the GKv went through virtually the same historical development with regard to its position in the world, their view of other denominations, and their membership numbers. The difference is that the GKv lagged roughly thirty years behind the GKN in these developments. This lag, so Dekker states, must be attributed to the fact that the GKv were founded later than the GKN (2013, p. 31-33).

It should be observed, however, that this hypothesis does not work out entirely, as the GKN was officially founded in 1892 and the GKv 52 years later, in 1944. As such, we have no explanation for why the perceived lag in development is only thirty years (as opposed to at least half a century), already suggesting that Dekker's theory perhaps does not explain everything. The timing in the GKN and GKv differs in other respects as well; although the ratio of baptised members to confessing members is similar in the two denominations, birth rates in the GKv started declining only fifteen years after they did in the GKN and remained higher overall. The death rates in the GKv were lower than in the GKN, and the balance of incoming and outgoing members left a larger gap in the GKv than it did in the GKN. In addition, the GKN started to develop a large circle of non-active members from around 1965 onwards, who officially counted as members of a congregation but did not participate. The same phenomenon can be observed in the GKV, but to a much smaller degree. Moreover, Dekker's model only covers the GKN and the GKV. He does not say anything about how the GKN and GKV developments compare to other denominations. Therefore, additional sources were consulted with a view to further exploring the hypothesis and seeing if it works.

## 26.1.2. A model for mapping the life cycle of the denomination

There are different sources that suggest models which can be used for charting the development of a denomination's membership numbers. These models are generally not derived from studies in the field of theology, but rather from sociological or historical works which have applied their knowledge and methods to church history. In what follows, I will first offer a brief overview of these sources, and end with a conclusion proposing a new model.

The first such source is the book *Levend lichaam* by Brouwer, De Groot, De Roest, Sengers, and Stoppels (2007), who describe the church — in this case, a local congregation — as a living organism, which may have a life cycle similar to that of other organisms. They base this idea on comparable theories applied to organisations and businesses, which also seem to follow a certain cycle. Brouwers et al. define five phases:

- 1. Church planting, when a new church is founded, either because there were no churches present or due to dissatisfaction with the existing church(es);
- 2. Growth, when a new church starts gaining members and grows richer in spirituality, becomes a more complex organisation, and/or becomes more visible in the neighbourhood;
- 3. Continuity, when a church stabilises, becomes independent and develops its own habits;
- 4. Revitalisation, when spirituality or membership starts to decline and a new boost is needed;
- 5. Church closure, if revitalisation does not occur or fails.

The authors note that not all churches necessarily pass through all phases, and also emphasise that phases may last any length of time. However, they also add that most churches, including Catholic, evangelical, and Protestant churches, can be found in any of these stages. The work of these authors focuses on the type of leadership needed for each type of situation, but for the purposes of my research, the phases are mostly applicable to the development of membership numbers.

Another useful model comes from the work of Bontekoning (2010) on generations. He describes the influence of successive generations on an organisation, especially after a large social or historical change takes place. In our case, such change would be the emergence of a new denomination. This first generation is tentative, but enthusiastic and willing to fight for their new lifestyle. The second generation adopts that lifestyle and starts to shape it with even more fire. The third generation is raised in it. By this time, traditions, habits, and rituals start to form. It is a time of peace, although that also means cracks may start showing in lifestyle. The fourth generation spots these cracks and starts to evaluate the lifestyle in a negative way. To them, it is old, conservative, and irrelevant. By this time, they may start to form a new change and thus become a new first generation (p. 36). Bontekoning's theory is interesting because it helps explain the curve which Dekker (2013) proposes and is also shown by Brouwer et al. (2007), with initial growth, stabilisation, and subsequent decline. A problem with Bontekoning's theory is that it does not apply neatly to churches or denominations, although it is used in practical theological studies, for instance by the Praktijkcentrum (e.g. De Jonge, Wijma & Schaeffer, 2017, p. 33). According to Bontekoning, generations last fifteen years (p. 31). This would imply that each denomination has a natural end after sixty years, when the fourth generation starts to see the new movement established by the first generation as stale and in need of renewal. The theory may, however, still be of some help in my research in explaining why the schisms occur with some frequency and why growth turns to decline after a certain length of time.

Finally, an older but widespread theory by Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977) can be applied to the development of a denomination, as Tijssen (2018) did when he applied it to the development of the experientialist pillar. Tuckman's theories were originally meant for describing the development of small groups, which in his observations took place in a certain way and with a certain order. First, a group starts to form. The members need to figure out the rules and their interpersonal relationships. After that, they start storming; conflict arises in many, but not all, cases. This is because the new group needs to test the boundaries and find out what is acceptable. When those conflicts are resolved, the group starts norming. The members are now used to each other and start to focus on the task at hand. When they begin performing, they become good at achieving their goals and solving whatever problems may arise. Finally, and this phase was added later in Tucker's 1977 paper with Jensen, a group may finish its task and have to disband. The members will then either have to celebrate their success or evaluate what went wrong. Regardless, this event must not go unmarked. Tijssen (2018) applies this theory to the history of the experientialist pillar to create a clear framework for his description. He chooses this theory over others because it is well-known, but gives no other
reasons (p. 16). Again, the phases Tuckman distinguishes may help to explain the stages of the development of membership numbers in the denominations in the Kampen dataset. Like Tijssen, we can apply this model to denominations, but we need to tread carefully here, since it was in no way designed to describe large groups of people who do not know each other personally. Nevertheless, the model still contains useful insights that may be of help in explaining some of the returning behaviours of denominations.

All of these models have their merits and drawbacks when one tries to apply them to denominations. Therefore, having described them, I propose a summarised model which can be used specifically for denominations, drawing from each of the models above. My model can be presented as follows:

Summarised model	Bontekoning	Brouwer et al.	Tuckman
Growth	Generation 1	Planting	Forming
	Generation 2	Growth	
Conflict	Generation 1		Storming
	Generation 4		
Continuity	Generation 3	Continuity	Norming
			Performing
Decline	Generation 4	Revitalisation (may	
		lead to growth)	
Closure		Closure	Adjourning

Table 26.1. A model for describing the life cycle of a denomination

Denominations start out by growing, being founded by a small enthusiastic group, a first generation, which attracts new members and stimulates growth from within and without. Sometimes, but not always, this denomination may meet conflict, as differing opinions are expressed. The result may be schism (storming). After this, a period of stabilisation occurs, where the membership numbers also remain fairly level. In most cases, this period is followed by a decline, and sometimes by closure. A denomination may stop existing altogether, return to its source (like the group of people who joined the *Vrijmaking* in 1944, but returned to the GKN in 1951), join a different group (like Geelkerken's followers, who left the GKN in 1926 but joined the NHK later on), or merge with other denominations (like the GKN did in 2004, and the GKV and NGK started doing beginning in 2020).

The next section will present the development of the different denominations in the Kampen dataset, along with an application of this summarised model derived from the sources above.

#### 26.2. Do denominations actually show the same development?

The data from the Kampen dataset can illustrate whether or not denominations actually show similar statistical developments. Figure 26.2 shows a comparison of the development of the different denominations, based on Dekker's figure (as in figure 26.1 above). The temporal aspect has been removed here. Instead, each denomination's developmental peak has been defined as 1, allowing us to see the similarities and differences in the shape of their development:



Figure 26.2. The development of the Reformed denominations and the Netherlands

Figure 26.2 shows that a number of denominations roughly followed the same development in the form of an inverted U-shape: strong initial growth, often with a dip several years later, a peak, a period of stabilisation, and, finally, decline. The GKN, CGK, GKv, NGK, and GB all follow this pattern. The curves for the GG, GGN, and HHK, however, look different, and are still stable by 2015. The GG show flattening growth, as do the GGN after a slight increase in 2008-2009 when the GGN (bv) largely returned. The HHK is much too recent to classify, so we will have to wait to see how it develops in the future. However, the graph does seem to show that, even though the GG and GGN are still growing, their growth is slowing, indicating that perhaps a period of decline may follow sometime in the future. Again, we will have to await further data to see how the trends in these denominations develop. The periods of conflict are also visible in figure 26.2, especially for the GKN, GKv, GG, and GGN, which have all passed through one or more schisms that visibly affected their membership numbers.

Figure 26.2, then, seems to suggest that denominations do indeed follow similar patterns of overall temporal development. These findings can be summarised using the model proposed in section 26.1.5:

Denom	Growth	Growt h pa	Con- flict	Growth in con- flict	Conti- nuity	Growt h pa	Decline	Growth pa	Closure
GKN	1892- 1970	1.22%	1926; 1944	0.76%; -4.05%	1971- 1981	0.05%	1982- 2003	-1.30%	Merged in 2004
CGK	1892- 1968	3.73%			1969- 1985	0.64%	1986-?	-0.20%	
GKv	1944- 1995	0.86%	1967; 2003; 2009	-4.86%; -0.82%; -0.61%	1996- 2003	0.64%	2003- 202	-0.68%	To merge in the 2020s
NGK	1967- 1980	2.09%			1981- 2012	0.40%	2012- 202	-0.44%	To merge in the 2020s
GG	1907- 1990	1.08%	1954	-13%	1991-?	0.66%			
GGN	1954- 1995	1.87%	1980	-18%	1996-?	0.98%			
ннк	2004-?	0.64%							
GB	1906-?		2004	-20%	?-1989	0.75%	1990-?	-2.82%	

Table 26.2. The life cycles of the denominations in the Kampen dataset

Table 26.2 summarises the phases I have described above and shows the years in which they occurred for the denominations in the Kampen dataset. These dates are based on the annual growth rates, which are also presented in the table for each period. This table shows that it is indeed possible to distinguish different periods of development for the respective denominations and that they generally follow each other in the same order. There are, however, also considerable differences. The period of initial growth may last a long or very short time; the GKN, CGK, and GG kept growing for eighty to ninety years, whereas the GKV and GGN only did so for forty to fifty years. The initial growth of the NGK stopped after less than fifteen years.

Conflict is apparently not unavoidable, as the CGK and NGK have not gone through such a phase. The CGK are the denomination to have gone the longest without schism, although a number of ministers and (parts of) local churches did at one time leave and join the GG or OGG or became independent. It is also interesting to note that almost all of the denominations shown above were born out of conflict. Another point of note is that, after 1944, the GKN also continued to exist without any schisms. The most recent schisms occurred in the GKv, in 2003 and 2009<sup>3</sup>, and the emergence of the HHK can be seen as a schism within the GB in 2004, but before that, the last schism to occur took place in 1980. When all of these secessions are listed in order (1926, 1944, 1954, 1967, 1980, 2003, 2009), their frequency seems to diminish in later years. Most schisms also seem to occur during a denomination's growth phase. The GKv is the only exception to this, as it saw two schisms during the decline phase. The emergence of the HHK in 2004 can be understood as a schism within the GB, although it should be noted that the GB is not a denomination as such but rather a network of people. Eventually, however, part of the GB constituency formed its own denomination in the HHK.

The period of stability also varies in duration. It lasted ten years in the GKN, but over thirty years in the NGK. The GG and GGN both still find themselves in this phase and have been there for nearly thirty years. The average relative growth per year during this phase varies from just above 0% to almost 1%. The phase of decline can also last very long. The CGK have gone over thirty years with declining membership numbers, as has the GB. The GKN had been in this stage for twenty years before they merged. The GKN are also the only denomination that has already stopped existing as an independent denomination, due to its merger with the NHK and ELK to form the PKN. The decreasing number of members was not the main reason for this merger, but one wonders how long the GKN would have been able to continue without it. The GKv and NGK are also set to merge again, not in the first place because of declining numbers. This process started in 2020 and will take several years to finalise. Time will tell how this merger will affect the development of their membership numbers.

All of these developments, which are present to a larger or smaller degree in almost all denominations, contribute to the decreasing growth we noted earlier. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the stages defined above and to a more detailed explanation of their causes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The schisms of 2003 and 2009 can be counted as either one or two schisms. Both arose from the same movement (i.e., GKv members who felt that the GKv were becoming too lenient and worldlike), and by 2020 carefully started exploring possibilities for cooperation. This would make them both a manifestation of the same schism. On the other hand, they can be counted as two schisms because they caused the emergence of two independent denominations which have both operated for a substantial number of years before starting to approach each other.

#### 26.3. Why these phases occur

Having discussed the phases denominations go through, we now turn to the specifics of those phases in some more detail. We will explore reasons for the occurrence of turning points and new stages so as to gain further insight into the causes for these similar developments.

#### 26.3.1. Growth

The first phase which denominations in the Kampen dataset go through is that of growth. After their institution, the denominations keep gaining members for varying periods of time. Led by a person to whom members of the group look for guidance (Tuckman, 1965; Brouwer et al., 2007), the group begins to take shape through enthusiasm for the new lifestyle (Bontekoning, 2010), and while that enthusiasm lasts, the group can continue to grow.

There are multiple ways for groups or societies to grow: external recruitment and internal recruitment. External recruitment occurs in denominations when they draw new members, meaning people who were not members of that denomination before or people who were not church members at all (both very different populations). This means that denominations need to recruit converts or people from other denominations. In the early phases, denominations often attract entire congregations that need time to decide whether to join a new denomination or to stay with the old. The CGK, for example, started with three local churches, but had 177 in 2015. In the beginning phase of their existence, new congregations often constituted local churches, or parts of them, that had belonged to another denomination, most often the GKN. The CGK also had preekstations, or satellite churches, which were at a distance from existing congregations and did not have their own minister, but people could convene there on Sundays for worship. These places often grew into actual congregations. Later on, new church buildings were erected to accommodate growing numbers of members. These new buildings were most often located in newly constructed neighbourhoods (Brouwer et al., 2010, p. 72).

Aside from entire congregations that switch denominational affiliation, there are also new members joining denominations, but the conclusions to part II showed that the number of incoming members is lower than that of outgoing members, meaning a negative balance in traffic. Therefore, the growth in denominations cannot be accounted for by external recruitment, as Dekker (1992, p. 96) and Janse (1985, p. 47, p. 217) have already stated. Everton (2018) also underlines this in a review of literature that shows new members are actually only recruited when they have a social link with a member of a church, even though such ties do not always ensure actual membership. Door-to-door recruitment proved highly unsuccessful (p. 88-91).

In light of the above, growth must result from natural internal growth, caused by high birth rates, as we indeed also saw in the conclusions to part II:

if the balance of people entering and leaving a denomination is negative, the gap is usually filled by high birth rates, until it is not. The children who are born are raised as part of their denomination. They are taught the values and doctrines of their denomination at home, in their local church, and at school. This is why Reformed education is often considered very important, since it is instrumental in transmitting the norms, values, and traditions of a culture. This cultural transmission is most successful if it is taught both within and outside the family. Children who have a lot of out-group — in this case, non-Reformed — friends are less likely to grow up to stay members (Bisin and Verdier, 2000, p. 957). A natural result of this approach to cultural transmission is pillarisation, when a society's sub-groups build their own micro-society in which most of their needs can be met. These pillars are stimulated by group cohesion, group activities, and limited exposure to diverging values and opinions. A pillar is also delineated by the identity of a group, as members draw clear lines between themselves and other groups (Janse, 1985, p. 43-47; Everton, 2018, p. 121). Most denominations in the Kampen dataset had experienced a period of pillarisation; the GKN, GKv, and experientialist denominations have all had very distinct pillars in society, with their own political parties, newspapers, unions, schools, etc. These pillars persisted for some time, and in a number of cases, mostly the experientialist denominations, they are still in existence. In the end, however, as we will see later, pillarisation also means that external recruitment becomes nearly impossible, strongly limiting external growth. At the same time, the NHK, a denomination that never really had its own pillar, also showed very little external growth.

In short, Reformed denominations generally do not grow due to external recruitment. This, together with the large exodus happening in almost all churches, is also part of the reason why, despite their higher birth rates, they are not keeping up with the growth of the Netherlands; for several years now, the Netherlands have mostly grown due to immigration (CBS, 2019a), which is absent in Reformed denominations. Instead, the denominations have grown due to high birth rates and by the way they managed to keep their community close together by the creation of their own societal niche during the pillarisation era.

#### 26.3.2. Conflict

As we have seen, most of the denominations in the Kampen dataset were born as the result of a conflict in another denomination. Until 1834, the NHK was the largest Protestant denomination in the Netherlands, but the schisms that followed led to the establishment of many new Protestant denominations. Most denominations are in some way a separated branch of the former national church.

According to Tuckman (1965), conflict, or storming, is a natural part of group formation and generally takes place after the initial phase of a new

group's emergence (p. 385). According to Tucker, members of the new group have to compete for acceptance of their ideas. Normally, in the context of the small groups or teams he describes, the group learns to solve its issues with the help and guidance of its leader. The members need to learn to accept each other's ideas and to work together. A denomination, however, is on the whole too large a group for this to happen in spontaneously, potentially leading to intense conflict and possibly schism. Notable about the schisms listed in table 26.2 is that they almost all occurred during the growth phase, when denominations are still in their initial stages and need to find their way. If we look at the years of the conflicts and phases of decline, however, the conflicts do not seem to influence the speed or timing of the decline.

This cyclicality is also something noted by Everton (2018). In sociology, a distinction is maintained between sect-type congregations and church-type congregations. The term 'sect' should not be taken to have any negative connotations here; it simply denotes a church or denomination that is at high tension with the social environment in which it exists. If a denomination rejects the society of which it is a part, it is generally typified as sect-like. Church-type congregations and denominations are generally more accepting of society and see themselves as a part of it (p. 201-202). Using several examples, Everton shows that denominations frequently start out as sect-type churches, shutting themselves off from society, adhering closely to the Bible and their own traditions, and fiercely resisting change. Over time, however, these denominations become more worldly as they focus less on absolute truth and more on the maintenance of unity. New denominations then start to split off. However, they too develop a worldliness of their own and "become the very type of church they decried in the first place" (p. 203), which then sets the stage for the birth of new sects. The reason for this is that sect-type denominations that if they do not change generally die out, due to a lack of recruitment. This cycle helps explain why the Afscheiding, Doleantie, Vrijmaking, the 1953 schism in the GG, the 1980 schism in the GGN, and the GKv schisms in 2003 and 2009 seem to have had similar motives: a return to the true Reformed teachings, roots, and traditions that defined their identity in the first place.

This development is clearly evident in the GKN and GKv. Kuyper, like Schilder, pursued a distinct, confessional church with active members. To both, reformation meant a return to the roots of the Reformed church, respectively in 1886 and 1944, in order to serve society as a whole: *reculer pour mieux sauter*. This service sometimes implied cooperation with members of other denominations in Christian organisations. This strategy was successful in Kuyper's days, but Schilder saw a decrease in adherence to the Reformed tradition taking hold of the Christian community. He called for distinctiveness again, but in his opinion this led to his deposal by the GKN in 1944. He then stated that cooperation with other Christians in society is impossible if one is not united with them in church (De Jong, 2019). This resulted in the GKv pillar. The conflicts with

other groups help define and strengthen the in-group identity by contrasting itself to the other (Everton, 2018, p. 40). As we saw, a clear and well-defined identity helps preserve group mentality and cohesion (Brouwer et al., 2007, p. 54-55; Everton, 2018, p. 121). Therefore, the conflicts that arose at different times in Dutch church history helped enable periods of growth.

#### 26.3.3. Continuity

These periods of growth, however, are almost inevitably followed by a period of stabilisation and continuity (Brouwer et al., 2007, p. 165). This is a peaceful time when the new group has settled, when habits, rituals, and traditions are shaped, and when the group forms a fairly cohesive whole (Brouwer et al., 2007, p. 132-150; Bontekoning, 2010, p. 36). During this time, the number of people leaving the denomination is not notably higher than the influx of new members and the birth rates stay steady. In this phase, churches may grow, but the growth is never very significant. Some denominations can remain in this state for very long, but continuity usually gives way to decline.

#### 26.3.4. Decline

The decline of a denomination can have different causes. Usually, it is a combination of forces outside and inside the denomination. The first important cause is the societal environment. A denomination is always part of a larger population. The denominations in the Kampen dataset are all part of Dutch society. As multiple sources state (SCP, 2004; CBS, 2016; Everton, 2018; Janse, 1985, Van der Ploeg, 1985; Polderman, 1996; Ricoeur, 2003; Schippers and Wenneker, 2014; Taylor, 2007; etc.), the modern west represents a secularising society. One of the frontrunners in this development is the Netherlands. In 1849, 100% of the population in the Netherlands held membership in a church; by 2015, this number had dropped to 50% (CBS, 2016).

Part of this drop can undoubtedly be attributed to secularisation, a complex of developments by which the church increasingly loses prevalence in a society. An exact definition is difficult to give; Dobbelaere, one of the most prominent scholars in the field in the Netherlands and Belgium, has written several works on secularisation, pillarisation, and other topics in the sociology of religion. In one of his more recent papers, he writes: "The concept of secularization refers to a process by which the overarching and transcendent religious system of old is reduced in modern functionally differentiated societies to a sub-system alongside other sub-systems, losing in this process its overarching claims over them" (Dobbelaere, 2007, p. 138). This is a multi-faceted definition. First, it states that secularisation denotes a society that has gone from being ubiquitously religious to losing religion as a default. Religion, so Dobbelaere points out, is now only one of the options. Religious institutions have lost authority in the different societal fields, such as the economy, politics, education, family, etc. The above definition also mentions the term 'functional differentiation', the fact that our society is made up of different sub-systems, each with its own function

and internal organisation. These sub-systems may interact and be interdependent, but they do not form a unity. Therefore, whereas religion used to be present in multiple sub-systems, including politics, education, family, and the medical system, it is now only one sub-system next to the other sub-systems and no longer governs them.

The fact that the church is now only one among many options has probably had an effect on membership numbers. As Everton (2018) states, if members of a certain group are located in social spaces where multiple groups compete for their time and attention, they tend to leave groups at higher rates than members in areas where groups do not overlap and people are members of only one group (p. 119-120). Especially when group identity is not sufficiently distinctive from a different group, people are likely to leave it. A church can only persist if it distinguishes itself from society in a way that is valuable for its members and makes membership worthwhile (Janse, 2015, p. 30). Therefore, if this distinction fades, increasing groups of people start to leave the church and the balance between incoming and outgoing members turns negative, as we indeed saw happening in several denominations in part II, most notably the GKv and the GG. It is important to realise that secularisation has a significant effect on church membership, but because it is a discussion which is too large to deal with in the research at hand, we will not explore it in further detail here (Paul, 2017; Taylor, 2007). Instead, we will look at other causes for diminishing membership numbers.

One such other cause, albeit still related to secularisation, is formed by the demographic developments. As part II showed, denominations go through demographic changes just like their social environment does. When the birth rates in the Netherlands started to decrease, the denominations followed suit, with a smaller or larger lag. Most denominations clearly showed declining birth rates. The NHK was the first, but the Roman Catholic Church and the GKN soon followed suit, as did smaller orthodox denominations like the CGK, GKv, and NGK. until, finally, also experientialist denominations started to slow down (Janse, 1985, p. 196-200). Since no further data are available on the birth rate in the GGN and HHK, it is difficult to say by what degree and with what speed their birth rates have dropped, but it is known (RD, 18 April 2018; RD 24 May 2018) that the GG and GGN were growing due to their respective birth rates alone. In the other denominations, however, the falling birth rates seem to correlate with the start of periods of continuity or decline. The birth rates in the GKN started dropping in 1970, followed almost immediately by the end of the growth period; the CGK birth rates started falling in 1986, and in the GKv this happened in 1994. As we have already seen, the main source of growth for the denominations in the Kampen dataset never was incoming members. Accordingly, a decline in birth rates naturally led to a decline in overall membership.

Given the secular society, cultural transmission as described by Bisin and Verdier (2000) also generally becomes more difficult, as children are no longer

raised in an exclusive in-group environment. This phenomenon matches Bontekoning's (2010) fourth generation, constituted by the people who spot and address the cracks in the system, and, in Janse's model (1985, p. 117-122), the people who are very good at pointing out the unlikely nature of the worldview presented to them by their parents and their teachers, which does not match the world they see around them. These factors cause baptised members to leave churches at a fast rate. However, it should be noted that this is what would happen with all other circumstances remaining unchanged. It is, of course, possible for a church to change its course in order to keep up with changing society or to address the needs of its members. In that case, there may be new incentives to keep the fire burning.

Finally, there are also numerous individual reasons for people to leave the church (for an exploration on this topic, see issue 2020/3 of *Handelingen*), usually related to a feeling of belonging and acceptance. Older generations feel that their church is changing too much, so that they no longer feel at home, while younger generations experience a lack of room for diverging opinions and doubt. People do not feel spiritually nourished, they do not feel comforted, or they simply do not feel any social need to attend church. In addition, group membership has become less self-evident, as group belonging has given way to an emphasis on individual needs, where offered services (such as the church) can all be evaluated, and a calculated choice can be made based on the merits and shortcomings of the available options (Van der Ploeg, 1985; Praktijkcentrum, 2018; Brouwer et al., p. 209; SCP, 2004).

#### 26.4. Conclusions

This chapter has explored the hypothesis that denominations go through the same development. It can be concluded that there are indeed similar phases for denominations to go through, although not all denominations go through all of them. The phases are growth, conflict, continuity, decline, and closure. Growth is mostly due to group cohesion, which can be caused by a shared niche, shared activities and rituals, and a clear identity. Growth mostly comes from within the group itself, meaning high birth rates, rather than new members. Conflict arises quite naturally and can cause new denominations to form. This dynamic has to do with distinctiveness; inter-group conflict can even enhance the sense of group identity within a group. It is telling that the more pluriform denominations, like the NHK and CGK, have had fewer conflicts with national consequences, like schisms. This does not mean that they never suffer conflict on a local level. In fact, due to their pluriform identity, local conflicts may be much more common in these denominations than in others, although here is no direct evidence for this. Growth is then followed by continuity, and, usually, decline. This decline can be caused by societal developments, like secularisation and rising individuality, as well as related demographic developments like declining

birth rates, and, finally, individual reasons. Decline can sometimes lead to the formation of a new denomination, or to denominations needing to merge together because they cannot maintain themselves any longer due to financial reasons or a lack of human resources. There are several observations, consequences, and notes that can be made based on this model.

First of all, not all denominations pass through the exact same development. Only the GKN, GKv, GG, and GGN have had periods of conflict that led to schisms, although the frequency of such schisms has declined in more recent years. The GKv are the only denomination that experienced schisms after its period of growth, showing that the stages through which a denomination passes can be repeated. In addition, not all denominations went through all of the other phases. The GKN, CGK, GKv, NGK, and GB all passed through the stages of growth, continuity, and decline, but the GKN are alone in experiencing closure, merging with the NHK and ELK to form the PKN, although the main reason for this merger is not to be sought in declining numbers. Similarly, the GKv and NGK have started a merger process in 2020. Interestingly, however, the GG, GGN, and HHK did not reach a stage of decline in the period studied, and it is possible that they will remain in the phase of continuity for many years to come. Nevertheless, the increasing number of people who were found to be leaving them, as presented in part II, does give rise to the assumption that their continuity may end at some point, after which they too will start to diminish. In 1985, Janse already predicted this would happen 1985(p. 217), but to date it has not actually happened yet. The years to come will have to show how the GG, GGN, and HHK will continue to develop. An interesting detail here is that the GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK, which make up the orthodox denominations in the dataset, are all already showing decline, whereas the experientialist GG, GGN, and HHK are not. This observation will be examined at greater length in the next chapter. where we try to find further support for the observed difference between the denominational groups and explain its possible causes.

In addition, the Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset experience growth and decline independently of the Dutch population. Overall growth in the Netherlands does not ensure growth in the denominations, and in the past denominations have also grown more rapidly than the Dutch population. The difference between Reformed denominations and other types of denominations, like the Catholic churches and the NHK, is also notable. The latter two, as already seen in chapter 25, do not show an inverted U-shaped development. Although there are no membership numbers available for evangelical churches, the general assumption is that they are growing at a tremendous rate, in part due to members from Reformed and other churches going there, and also in part because of their marketing strategies which are successfully attracting new members (Brouwer et al., 2007, p. 121). However, it may well be that the evangelical churches are still in the first stages of the inverted U-shape, and that they may start to decline later on, as large membership numbers have already been noted leaving (De Bruijne, Timmerman & Pit, 2009).

It is interesting that none of the denominations in the dataset were successfully recruiting members from the secular world, and also did not succeed in maintaining their natural growth. Even in the most persistent denominations, the net growth can hardly be retained. This points to a strong external pressure to adjust and adapt, as the church is apparently not seen as an available option for non-members to find what they need. This assumption is also confirmed by the right-to-left movement occurring in border traffic between denominations (see chapter 14).

Another observation of note is that the historical reasons for a denomination's growth or decline do not match. There is a wide variety of historical courses for churches to take: The GKN started due to an aversion to modernism. When that disappeared, the denomination also started to decline, as its members were well aware. The CGK had a less strongly delineated identity. Their main goal was to resist the sovereignty of Neo-Calvinism, and also to maintain unity without everybody having to agree on everything. It worked for a very long time, but the CGK are now starting to experience tensions, with parts of the denomination wanting to move towards a more evangelical style of church and other parts leaning more towards experientialist ideals. The CGK do, however, have roots similar to, for instance, the GKv, and have passed through similar historical developments, which make it difficult for them to maintain their opposition to society. The GKy started in resistance to the pretences of general synods, to the followers of Kuyper, and later to the weakly positioned NGK which no longer continued in the old lines. When the claim of being the only true church faded, the GKv members' bond with the denomination weakened. The NGK's reason for existence was just to be tolerant, and they are holding out well. When the GG were founded, this happened through Kersten's activism. Later on, they started their own pillar, and they are trying to hold on to their identity, defined by contrast to the other denominations. The GGN always were a thorn in the side of the GG, but the sharp edges of the conflict are now disappearing and there is careful, growing contact with the GG.

All of this goes to show that, even though the developments may seem to take on a similar shape, there is a lot of variation in detail, history, and culture, which gives each of the different denominations its own respective character. Nevertheless, a classification like the one I propose in this chapter offers significant insight into the socio-cultural and demographic factors that play into being a denomination and that may help local churches to understand the influences on their nature and development so as to be better able to articulate a vision and a mission.

# 27. The difference between orthodox and experientialist denominations

The conclusions of chapter 26 showed that one can theorise a similar development for all denominations. In that chapter, we proposed a model according to which denominations pass through initial growth, stabilisation, decline, and, in some cases, disbanding. One of the notable conclusions, however, was that experientialist denominations either do not follow this pattern or else find themselves at a different point of their life cycle. This chapter will further explore this conclusion that orthodox and experientialist denominations show dissimilar developments.

# 27.1. Do orthodox and experientialist denominations show a different development?

The Kampen dataset offers us some information on the difference between the two groups of denominations, which can be summarised in the following figure:



Figure 27.1. The development of the orthodox and experientialist denominations

In figure 27.1, the CGK, GKv, and NGK have been combined to form the orthodox group, while the GG and GGN have been fused to form the experientialist denominations. The GKN and HHK have been left out in order to keep a sense of continuity, as the inclusion of these groups would result in significant deviations when the GKN disappear and the HHK emerges. The schisms

resulting in the establishment of the GGN and the NGK have been left in, since, given their nature, they did not lead to an increase or decrease in total membership numbers. For the sake of easy comparison between the two values, we have placed the respective developments on an index.

Figure 27.1 shows that the two lines started out fairly similarly, with initial growth, which nevertheless already showed itself stronger in the experientialist denominations than the orthodox denominations. Around 2000, the growth in the orthodox denominations stopped, and by 2008 became a negative value. This is not a pattern we see happening in the experientialist denominations, which kept growing. This underlines the conclusions of chapter 25, where it was found that, even if the experientialist denominations follow the phases most denominations go through, by the end of the data collection period they were still in the phase of continuity, and not yet experiencing decline, as is true for the orthodox denominations.

In order to explore the hypothesis of different development further, we carried out a t-test – i.e., a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups – comparing the average growth of orthodox denominations and experientialist denominations for each decade beginning in 1950. This test incorporates all of the denominations in the dataset, including the GKN and HHK. Growth is defined here as the annual average growth in all municipalities, which is a more specific value and gives the t-test more input than the national averages do:

Year range	Growth orthodox	Growth experientialist	Difference	Р
1950-1959	1.35	1.39	0.04	0.4456
1960-1969	1.82	1.84	0.02	0.4589
1970-1979	1.56	1.25	-0.32	0.0633
1980-1989	-0.36	-0.59	-0.23	0.3238
1990-1999	-1.28	0.28	1.55	0
2000-2015	-0.92	0.26	1.18	0

Table 27.1. T-tests of the difference between the growth of orthodox and experientialist denominations

Table 27.1. shows the results of this test. The first column shows the year range, and the second column the average annual growth of all orthodox denominations combined in that range; the GKN have been left out after 2000. The third column displays the average annual growth of experientialist denominations, followed by the difference in the averages in the fourth column. Finally, the fifth column lists the p-value, the outcome of the test, showing whether or not the difference is statistically significant, which it is at a value of < 0.05.

Generally, the experientialist denominations showed higher growth than the orthodox denominations, except when in the 1970s the NGK started to grow, leading to higher growth in the orthodox denominations. By 1980, the group of orthodox denominations as a whole started to shrink, no doubt largely as a result of the decline in the GKN. The experientialist denominations also reflect a bad time that decade with the schism in the GGN leading to the emergence of the GGN (bv), for which the Kampen dataset has no data available. Beginning in the 1990s, however, the growth in the orthodox denominations stopped altogether, but it continued in the experientialist denominations.

Likewise of note is that, even though the experientialist denominations show higher rates of growth than the orthodox denominations do, both do show a general decline in these rates across time. Both groups of denominations started out high, with growth rates between 1 and 2%, but from the 1980s onwards, the growth rates dropped below 0 in the orthodox denominations and below 0.5 in the experientialist denominations. For both groups, the growth did return to higher levels in 2000-2015. In the orthodox denominations, this dynamic can be explained by the exclusion of the GKN from the dataset, since they had had a strong negative statistical impact on the growth of the group as a whole, due to their transition to the PKN. In the experientialist denominations, the members who had left the GGN in 1980 gradually returned, accounting in part for the increased growth.



The difference between the two groups shows a general increase:

Figure 27.2. The difference in growth between orthodox and experientialist denominations

The difference in growth starts out minimally, with values close to zero between 1950 and 1969. In the following years, the orthodox denominations underwent higher growth than the experientialist denominations. For the period 1970-1979, this is accounted for by the early years of the NGK, which started out with a strong growth. The decade thereafter, experientialist denominations saw the GGN schism, resulting in the loss of a fair share of members. Beginning in the 1990s, however, the decline in the orthodox denominations really set in, especially in the GKN, and for the period 2000-2015, for which the GKN are no longer included, the growth was still negative in the orthodox denominations. Interestingly, this is the time when the GKv pillar started to fall apart, as resistance to the GKN became less useful given that the GKN were declining as strongly as they were, while the GKv as such had also started to become more open towards society and other denominations. During these years, the experientialist pillar was still very active.

Apart from overall development, there are also other differences between the orthodox and experientialist denominations. A statistic that illustrates this fact quite well is the proportion of confessing members. Higher rates of baptised members are an indicator of a younger membership in a denomination. High numbers of baptised members may also be indicative of high birth rates. Since there are no birth rates available for the experientialist denominations, the proportion of confessing to baptised members will have to do. Figure 27.3 shows the proportion of the two denominational groups composed of confessing members:



Figure 27.3. The proportion of confessing members in orthodox and experientialist denominations

This figure shows that the orthodox denominations and experientialist denominations ran parallel for some time, until around 1971. The orthodox denominations had slightly more than 50% confessing members, while the experientialist denominations came in somewhat under 50%. After 1971, the image begins to change. The proportion of confessing members begins to rise in the orthodox denominations, and at the same time birth rates start dropping (see chapter 14). In the experientialist denominations, however, the proportion of confessing members continues to remain at around 50%, even as late as 2015. This means that roughly half of the members in the experientialist denominations, their proportion dropped to a third by 2015. Again, this is a notable difference between the two groups of denominations.

#### 27.2. Reasons to assume a different development

As we already noted in our discussion in chapter 2, there are multiple reasons for making a distinction between orthodox and experientialist denominations. Dekker (1992) maintains a distinction between modern Reformed, orthodox Reformed, and experientialist churches, Janse (1985) distinguishes between orthodox and experientialist churches, and Polderman (1996) presents a scale from orthodoxy to experientialism based on the way denominations view their place in the world. For the purposes of this study, we maintained a distinction between two groups: orthodox denominations (GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK) and experientialist denominations (GG, GGN, HHK, and GB). Of course, as we likewise observed in chapter 2, this distinction is not without its problems, but they will not be repeated here. Since Dekker (2013) bases his hypothesis regarding the GKN and GKv passing through the same statistical development on the assumption that they have a similar nature (p. 117), one might assume that denominations of a different type will show a different development. Earlier findings in my research (chapter 14) likewise indeed indicated this possibility.

The difference in nature between the two types of denominations studied here lies in a variety of areas. In the first place, they have different histories. All of the orthodox denominations in the dataset had their roots in the *Gereformeerde* movement of the nineteenth century. The GKN, GKv, and NGK can all be traced back to the *Vereniging* of 1892. However, the CGK, GG, GGN, and HHK cannot be traced back to the *Vereniging*, and travelled their own respective paths. The CGK, however, have since positioned themselves closer to the orthodox denominations than the experientialist denominations. Secondly, the two groups also differ on the theological level. While orthodox denominations focus more on the rational aspect of faith, the experientialist denominations emphasise experience. The GKN followed Kuyper in his views on presumptive regeneration and a positive stance towards the world, which was part of the reason for the CGK not to join the GKN and for the GKV later to leave. The experientialist denominations take the notion of presumptive regefineration even further, insisting that baptised children are part of a holy covenant, but still need a moment of conversion in order to be truly saved. This notion of conversion represents an important point of difference separating experientialist and orthodox churches. Although they do share the same confessions, they have different understandings of the covenant and of the part the believer plays in it. Orthodox denominations place greater emphasis on the active life of the church-goer, whereas experientialist denominations focus on regeneration and conversion. In the orthodox denominations' view of the covenant, baptised children belong to the people of God. In experientialist denominations, the focus is on a process of contemplation on one's spiritual life, leading eventually to conversion, as a necessary step in the Christian's life towards redemption.

Finally, we can add a number of cultural differences. Orthodox denominations see themselves more as a part of larger society than experientialist denominations do. The latter therefore have an identity defined by opposition to society at large, clearly distinguishing themselves in their lifestyle, leisure time, clothing, politics, etc. Moreover, they hold on to customs and traditions that have long since disappeared in wider society.

#### 27.3. Explanations for these differences

The previous two sections seem to suggest that experientialist denominations show better growth than orthodox denominations, at least, from around 1970 onwards. This supposition is not new. In fact, the phenomenon has already been observed and studied in detail by Kelley (1986) in his work *Why conservative churches are growing*. Kelley's theories explore the causality between strictness and commitment, participation, and, indirectly, growth. His study continues to be cited (Iannaccone, 1998; Everton, 2018) and expanded, and can also be of service here.

Kelley's (1986, p. 99-102) main argument concerning growth patterns is that strict churches place higher demands on their members. This boosts commitment and participation, and makes church membership on the whole a more fulfilling experience. Iannaconne (1994) adds that high demands discourage free-riding; people who would otherwise only participate marginally are screened out, and highly involved members alone remain (p. 1183). While this dynamic initially leads to decline, it also means that the most active members remain and that they will not leave. In addition, strict churches often impose some sort of stigmatising behaviour on their membership, like a different diet, clothing style, grooming, and approaches to alcohol, sex, and drugs. This distinguishes members from non-members, and also prevents members from partaking in non-group activities. Therefore, members make no use of secular commodities and rarely come in contact with worldly matters. As Everton (2018, p. 118) states, more social ties outside their church make it more likely that members will leave. In addition, strict churches tend to have tighter social networks (p. 67), making it easier for members to monitor each other with regard to their participation in external activities. Another positive side effect of this distinctiveness is that experientialist denominations have a clearer identity, a prerequisite for keeping membership numbers up and attracting and maintaining members (Brouwer et al., 2007, p. 130; p. 229). The experientialist denominations define their identity by what the secular world is not, denouncing matters like contraception, visits to the cinema, television ownership, the consumption of alcohol, etc.

The fact of the matter is that the above image of a denomination with a strong identity as defined by its differences over against other groups and its high demands on members, coincides very closely with the orthodox and experientialist denominations in their early days. The GKN members had Christian schools, were expected to vote for a particular political party, and read a specific newspaper. The same went for the GKy, with their ethical conflict, discouraging members from having contact with non-members. Interestingly, these denominations stopped growing around the time their pillars started opening up. As such, contact with other (secular) groups increased, heterogeneity and pluralism were on the rise, social cohesion declined, etc. Another practical effect is that, as contraception became acceptable, birth rates declined, stunting the natural internal growth of the denominations. The experientialist denominations started much later with the formation of their pillars (Tijssen, 2018, p. 12), around the 1960s, although they did already have their primary schools and political party long in place, and informal social contacts with the outside world were limited. The experientialist pillars are still standing, but they are changing and becoming more open (RD, 18 March 2016).

This process of de-pillarisation is not an unnatural one. As Iannaccone (1994) observes in a further note on Kelley's (1986) work, it is also possible for a church to become too strict. When the cost of membership becomes too high or random, people are no longer willing to invest in their membership. The way to attain an optimal gap between the church and society means "walking a very fine line in adjusting to social change so as not to become too deviant, but not embracing change so fully as to lose all distinctiveness, which is essential" (p. 1203). This means that a church must change and adapt in relation to society so as to to attain optimal attractiveness to (potential) members, but it must not pass certain boundaries. The right balance is obviously extremely difficult to achieve. This phenomenon may well explain the pattern discovered in chapter 14, where people were found to be leaving the stricter denominations for slightly less strict denominations, as a natural way to maintain their optimal cultural gap.

Differences in theology may also have been of influence towards the more persistent growth of the experientialist denominations. As has been noted, their theology first requires believers to experience a moment of conversion before they can be sure that they are saved. The emphasis is on human sinfulness and on the absence of salvation for those who have not had such a moment of conversion. It is the Holy Spirit who must accomplish his salvific work in the hearts of the elect. To this end, he uses the word of God as preached in church. Only a part of the congregation has the certainty of regeneration, and they belong to the covenant of grace and participate in the Holy Supper. The other members are held to be outside this covenant, and hope to experience conversion one day. For this reason, church and faith are very weighty topics. This encourages church attendance, and the experientalist churches generally prescribe explicitly Christian behaviour in dress, life style, and socializing. In orthodox churches, salvation is likewise understood to depend on God's grace. but a specific conversion experience is not required, the doctrine of election has a less prominent place, all baptised children are considered part of the covenant, and members rely heavily on the certainty of faith. Members of orthodox churches show greater variety in Christian behaviour. Such social reasons, therefore, mean that leaving the church or joining a church from a different denomination has much more serious consequences in experientialist denominations than it has in orthodox denominations.

#### 27.4. Conclusions

This chapter has sought to explore the hypothesis that experientialist denominations go through a different statistical development compared to that of orthodox denominations. It is certainly so that experientialist denominations show much more persistent growth. While orthodox denominations stopped growing in the 1970s and 1980s, experientialist denominations were shown to be still growing in 2015, albeit at decreasing rates.

Reasons for the persistent growth of the experientialist denominations are for the most part related to the way they bind their members; high membership requirements also lead to high commitment and participation. A clear identity, which is constructed on contrast to other groups, whether secular or orthodox, gives their members a clear idea of what they are and what they are not. In addition, the way experientialist denominations profile themselves enhances growth-stimulating factors, like resistance to contraception, which leads to high birth rates and in turn to natural growth (although birth rates were also shown to be on the decline in experientialist churches). The theology of experientialist denominations also entails that the cost of leaving the church is much higher than it is in orthodox denominations. Although traffic between experientialist churches is common, fewer members actually leave this group than they do in orthodox churches. In conclusion, in order to grow, churches have to walk a very fine line between being too strict and being too loose. Excessively loose churches encourage free-riding members, who do not contribute or participate and also have a negative influence on the commitment of the remaining members. Excessively strict churches make the cost of membership too high without replacing it with something worthwhile, making membership difficult and unrewarding. In a changing society, it is important for churches to redefine the optimal gap to maintain between themselves and the majority population continually and to maintain a clear, well-defined identity.

### 28. Churches and degree of urbanisation

The third hypothesis formed on the basis of the data examined before is the first one related to the spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands. As has been observed in part III, the denominations in the Kampen dataset were found most often in places of medium urbanisation. Some denominations had local congregations in larger cities in early years, but maps showing the geographic distribution of church membership in later years showed a decrease there. Therefore, one can assume that there is a link between church growth and urbanisation. This chapter will delve deeper into this question and consider the hypothesis that churches have more persistent growth in less urbanised areas.

## 28.1. Do churches develop differently in different degrees of urbanisation?

The hypothesis can be tested by mapping the difference in degree of urbanisation in combination with the growth of each denomination, using information from the Kampen dataset. The degree of urbanisation is measured here using the CBS index, based on address density. This index defines five categories: the G4 (i.e., the four largest cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht), highly urbanised areas, moderately urbanised areas, slightly urbanised areas, and non-urbanised or rural areas. The growth of the congregations in different denominations in these varying areas of urbanisation will be presented below.



Figure 28.1. The average growth of the GKN, CGK, and GKv by degree of urbanisation

In the first place, the GKN show that the lowest growth is to be found in the G4. Before their peak, the G4 simply showed the lowest annual growth at roughly 0.5%, but this turned into a large annual decrease of almost 5% after the peak in 1971. Before 1971, the highest growth could be found in highly urbanised and moderately urbanised places. Growth in slightly urbanised and non-urbanised places was lower, but still noticeable. As the overall growth stopped after 1971, the largest decreases occurred in the G4, followed by highly urbanised areas, showing that the difference between pre-peak growth and post-peak growth hit the highest levels in the larger cities. The remaining three categories of urbanisation all show growth rates between -0.4% and -0.5%. The turn from growth to decline was the smallest in these areas, showing greater stability.

The CGK never had growing churches in the G4. From the beginning of the dataset, growth in the G4 was negative. Before the CGK peak, the remaining categories all had a growth of 0.8% to 1.3%, with the highest level of growth coming in rural areas. After the peak, however, the G4 and rural areas show the largest decreases, followed by moderately urbanised areas, highly urbanised, and slightly urbanised places.

The GKv show a similar pattern before their peak. There was no growth at all in the G4 and low levels of growth in the remaining categories, with the highest increase coming in slightly urbanised areas (0.45%). After the peak, the decline in the G4 became much smaller, but the levels of decline were much higher in rural areas and slightly urbanised areas.



Figure 28.2. The average growth of the NGK, GG, GGN, and HHK by degree of urbanisation

The NGK show an interesting pattern of strong decline in the G4 and rural areas, but either low growth or slight decline in the other categories. Growth in the NGK was the highest in slightly urbanised places, but never rose above 0.28% annually.

The GG also show no growth in the G4 at all, but rather a decrease, and also a very small decrease in rural areas. The highest growth can be found in moderately urbanised places, followed by slightly urbanised areas and highly urbanised areas, with only a small difference between the latter two. The GGN are slightly different from most other denominations in that they had no growth in the G4, highly urbanised areas, or moderately urbanised areas, but only in slightly urbanised areas and rural places. The HHK is the only denomination to show strong growth in the G4, but this image is rather distorted because the HHK only has two churches there: one in Rotterdam and one in The Hague. The congregation in The Hague was shrinking annually by 0.4%, but the one in Rotterdam grew by an annual average of 9%, from 200 members in 2010 to 300 in 2015. Therefore, the statistics are not quite representative, since the denomination has a minimal representation in the G4 overall. The real growth mostly took place in moderately urbanised and slightly urbanised areas, while highly urbanised areas and rural places show some decline.

The GB shows very little growth overall:



Figure 28.3. The average growth of the GB by degree of urbanisation

In the period until the GB peak, the strongest decline shows in the G4 and in non-urbanised areas, but after the peak year it shifts to the highly urbanised areas. Only the slightly urbanised areas show any growth at all during the peak years, at 0.02%. Apart from that, the decrease is so widespread that it is difficult to make much of a distinction at all.

### 28.2. Reasons to assume a difference between different degrees of urbanisation

There are several reasons to assume differences in church growth over different degrees of urbanisation. It should first be noted that the topic has already been broached in the USA by Mulder (2012, 2015), although his research focuses predominantly on the relationship between the relocation of churches and so-called white flight – the phenomenon that white people move away from certain neighbourhoods as the African-American population there grows (2012, p. 16). Mulder shows that most American Protestant churches share in this phenomenon, accounting for the general move from city centres to the suburbs.

Miller (2017) adds new findings, describing other factors of influence as well, such as general developments in the population, but also the established existence of other churches in the neighbourhoods to which churches are moving (p. 360). Developments in the overall population are quite likely to have an effect in the Netherlands as well, as the country saw suburbanisation movements between 1960 and 1975 similar to those described by Miller for the

USA after WWII (p. 343). We already encountered this suburbanisation process in chapter 15 above, where we observed a drop in the population of the four largest Dutch cities and growth in less urbanised areas. Throughout part III, we saw that most denominations also followed similar patterns, albeit not without some variation. The GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK generally started out with a fair share of members in the large cities and in highly urbanised areas, but their shares there dropped as the proportions in less urbanised areas increased. Membership in rural areas was shown to be generally lower. In experientialist denominations, membership was almost non-existent in large cities, but a high percentage of members could be found in rural areas and in slightly urbanised areas.

Finally, there is some Dutch literature that focuses on churches in areas with specific degrees of urbanisation. Boon, Visch, Paas, and Wierda (2000) wrote a report on the state of the CGK in the largest cities, in response to worries expressed by their denomination's general synod. Schippers and Wenneker (2014) have published a report on religiosity in Amsterdam, describing the decline of Protestantism and the rise of Islam. At the other end of the scale, Gelderloos (2018) published a work on the place of the church in rural villages, a topic that was also discussed in detail by Brouwer et al. (2007). The general impression given by these studies is that religion, or at least Protestantism, is on the decline in both highly urban and rural areas. Churches in big cities have difficulties attracting new members, and easily lose existing members; rural churches face an ageing population and a general decline in the overall population.

#### 28.3. Explanations for these differences

The decline or absence of churches in the larger cities can be the result of a variety of developments. As Miller (2017) already wrote, the relocation of churches is partly accounted for by the fact that they follow the general development of the population. As we saw in chapter 15, the population in the G4 dropped sharply between 1960 and 1975, so as to fall below the population of highly urbanised, moderately urbanised, and slightly urbanised places. A smaller population could only be found in the countryside. Highly urbanised places still carry the largest population in the Netherlands, followed by slightly urbanised places and then moderately urbanised areas. All three middle categories have shown strong increases since World War II. Since these are the places with the most inhabitants in the Netherlands, it is unsurprising that the same pattern can be seen in churches. In addition, Boon et al. (2000) mention several other reasons for the difficulties churches experience maintaining their growth in cities. One is that the demography of cities has changed; cities are mostly populated by students, young singles, the well-off, people with low incomes, and immigrants (p. 42). Reformed denominations mostly consist of

older, middle-class people and their children, precisely the types of people who generally do not live in large cities. As churches on the whole follow their members, we find fewer churches in large cities. Another reason Boon et al. propose is that birth rates declined first in cities, causing a decrease in the Dutch population in general and in Reformed denominations in particular, such that churches started to shrink there first (p. 42). Secularisation is also an important factor in cities (Ricoeur, 2003), as is border traffic between denominations, since it is simply easier to change denominational affiliation in cities given the wider supply of different types of churches (Everton, 2018, p. 26). All of these factors play a part in the decline and disappearance of churches from large cities. In the suburbs, small cities, and large towns, growth was generally larger, or, at least, the decreases were smallest. Again, the suburbanisation of the 1960s and 1970s played a major role in this. Brouwer et al. (2007) add that while church planting occurs in different situations, in the Netherlands the most common types of plants are pioneer planting, which typically occurs in new housing areas (p. 72), and saturation planting, when new congregations are established to keep up with the expansion of the population (p. 76). Simply put, as an increasing number of people moved to the suburbs, churches also started growing there.

In rural areas as well, the development was similar to that of the Dutch population. As car ownership and social mobility increased, people started to leave the countryside in order to work in the city, and later moved there to decrease commuting times. Young people who go to college or university leave the countryside in order to find employment. The result is a continuing exodus from rural areas, which we also saw reflected on the maps in chapter 15. confirming the findings by the CBS (2019b). The ageing of the remaining population follows when death rates are higher than birth rates, leaving churches to close down due to a declining membership. On the other hand, Brouwer et al. (2007) describe the rural churches as the most stable. They gain few members, but they also lose few, since most people who still live there are very loyal churchgoers and social cohesion is very high. Changes occur at a slower pace in rural areas, and the churches there seem to develop almost independently of society (p. 132-135). However, in our study this social cohesion and independence of the general population was apparently not strong enough to stop declining membership numbers in rural areas, except in the GGN – although, to be fair, it must be noted that other motives also play a part here, like the shortfall of ministers in this denomination.

#### 28.4. Conclusions

In this chapter, we tested the hypothesis that urbanisation is of effect on church growth. This proved indeed to be the case, as most churches showed large decreases in the larger cities and in rural areas. In fact, the effect was almost universal for all denominations in the Kampen dataset; the GGN were the only denomination to show growth in rural areas.

There was almost no growth in churches in large cities, as the demography of cities differs significantly from that of churches. Cities are often populated by singles, rich or poor, young people without families, and immigrants, whereas church members are generally middle-class native Dutch people with children. The growth of churches was highest in areas of moderate urbanisation (i.e., small cities, large towns). This is mostly due to the suburbanisation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, when increased mobility and car ownership caused most of the Dutch population to relocate from large cities with expensive housing, no gardens, and little room, to larger houses in greener areas in the suburbs or smaller towns. Growth in rural areas, although it could be found in most churches, declined and turned to decrease, due to the declining overall population there. The exodus of young people together with an ageing population led to lower birth rates and higher death rates.

### 29. The presence of other denominations

The fourth hypothesis proposed on the basis of the results in the conclusions to parts II and III was that local churches show more persistent growth when surrounded by churches from other denominations. This chapter will explore this hypothesis in greater depth by delving into the available information and testing the differences between the growth in churches with other denominations in the vicinity and in churches with no other denominations nearby. In addition, this chapter will include a case study in which a matter related to the presence of churches from other denominations will be discussed, namely the influence of the Dutch Bible belt on the growth of Reformed denominations, both orthodox and experientialist.

29.1. Does the presence of other denominations influence the growth of other local churches?

In this section, we will test the hypothesis using information from the Kampen dataset. This will be done predominantly with t-tests examining the difference in growth between churches with and without other denominations nearby. To this end, we have drawn a distinction between municipalities that have two or more denominations and those with at most one denomination in order to avoid measuring the influence of the presence of the denomination itself as both a dependent and independent variable. The same test will be carried out for the presence of any denomination, and for a denomination of a similar type, classified as either orthodox or experientialist.

Tables 29.1 and 29.2 show a summary of the results of the t-tests testing the difference in growth between churches with other denominations nearby and those without:

Denomi- nation	Growth with no other denominations	Growth with other denomi- nations of any type	Difference	Ρ
GKN	1.1	0.42	-0.68	0
CGK	-2.78	0.3	3.08	0.001
GKv	-1.29	0.07	1.36	0.1425
NGK	-0.71	-0.19	0.52	0.2865
GG	-0.54	0.35	0.89	0.1658
GGN	-0.4	0.08	0.48	0.46
ННК	-0.63	0.75	1.38	0.0606

Table 29.1. The growth of denominations with and without the presence of other denominations over all years of data collection

Table 29.1 shows the difference in the growth of local churches where churches from any of the other denominations are present. The first column shows the growth of churches with no other churches present, the second column shows the average growth of churches with other denominations nearby, the third column shows the difference between the values of the first two columns, and the final column presents the statistical significance of this difference, where significance is set at <0.05. As the table shows, the differences can be quite large, without always being statistically significant. The GKN and CGK are alone in showing significantly different levels of growth. This seems to justify the careful conclusion that the presence of other denominations may have an influence on the growth of at least some churches. The table also shows the directionality of the influence: the GKN grew more without the presence of other denominations, but for all other denominations, this effect was reversed, as they show larger growth with the presence of other denominations nearby. It should be kept in mind, however, that for larger cities the chance is also higher that multiple denominations will be present. And as we already saw, the GKN were the only denomination in the dataset to have a notable number of members in cities.

A further test can shed some more light on the nature of this effect, when we maintain a distinction between types of denomination that influence denominational growth. In the next t-test, the GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK are tested by the presence of other orthodox denominations, while the GG, GGN, and HHK are tested by the presence of other experientialist denominations:

Denomi- nation	Growth with no other denominations	Growth with other denomi- nations of the same type	Difference	Р
GKN	1.01	0.66	-0.35	0.0016
CGK	-1.4	0.27	1.66	0.0129
GKv	-1.37	0.06	1.43	0.1659
NGK	-1.38	-0.16	1.22	0.0787
GG	0.32	0.3	-0.02	0.4777
GGN	-0.08	0.11	0.19	0.4219
ннк	-0.53	1.27	1.8	0.0027

Table 29.2. The growth of denominations with and without the presence of other, similar denominations

Table 29.2 likewise shows the GKN growing more without the presence of other denominations, and the GG is also shown with slightly higher growth without the presence of other denominations, although in this case the difference is negligible. All other churches show higher growth with the presence of churches from other denominations of the same type. The difference in growth is statistically significant for the GKN, the CGK, and the HHK. For the HHK, this

is not surprising, as it was born from a desire to return to classic Reformed doctrine. The local congregations of this denomination were founded in places where the mother church was no longer considered adequate.

The information shown in the tables above may still be rather abstract. For a clearer view, the difference in growth has been presented in figure 29.1, with the difference in growth with the presence of any other denomination in blue and the difference in growth with the presence of denominations of the same type in orange:



Figure 29.1. The difference in growth with and without other denominations present

The graph shows more clearly what the tables already suggested. Interestingly, the GKN show lower growth with the presence of other denominations nearby than they do in places with only a GKN present. This effect is stronger with denominations of any other type than it is with other orthodox denominations, showing that the growth of the GKN was hampered more by the presence of experientialist churches than by other orthodox churches. Other denominations show mostly positive influences from the presence of other nearby denominations. The CGK show much higher growth with any other denomination(s) present, and slightly lower growth with the presence of other orthodox churches alone. Of course, as discussed in chapter 2, it is difficult to classify the CGK given their widely varying nature, as some local churches identify more as orthodox and others more as experientialist. However, the influence of experientialist churches on the growth of the CGK is negative, at - 0.05%. The GKv show an equally positive influence from the presence of any church and from orthodox churches, but the NGK only reflect higher growth

with the presence of other orthodox churches. The presence of churches of any denomination hardly has an effect.

The presence of any church has a more positive influence on the growth of GG churches than the presence of experientialist churches. However, as neither growth value is very high, the effects seem to be random. The GGN display significant growth with the presence of any church and with experientialist churches, but again, the differences are small. Finally, the HHK seems to do very well with the presence of any other denomination, but even more so with the presence of experientialist churches alone.

### 29.2. Reasons to assume an influence of the presence of similar churches

This fourth hypothesis – i.e., that the growth of churches is more persistent when there are churches of other denominations present – differs from the previous three in that it is the only one that is based solely on findings from the dataset and not on any assumptions or information from the literature. The assumption stems mostly from results presented in part III: denominations that shrink often remain in places where congregations of multiple denominations are also present, and the growth in those areas is at higher levels than it is in other places. In chapter 23, we found that churches of all denominations disappeared rather early on from large cities like Amsterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. Rotterdam proved a bit of an exception, as it has a large experientialist community. Areas in Groningen, Friesland, and Drenthe were also liable to decline, but Flevoland, the western parts of Overijssel and Gelderland, the more rural parts of Utrecht, the south of Zuid-Holland, and Zeeland were places where growth was sustained. This finding was the same for orthodox and experientialist churches.

This shift from churches all over the country to churches in places with congregations from multiple denominations can be made visible in the maps in figure 29.2, which shows the number of denominations present in each municipality. It should be kept in mind, however, that the GKN are no longer on the map for 2015, while the HHK and NGK were founded in the gap separating the two maps:



Figure 29.2. The number of denominations present in each municipality in 1955 and 2015

These maps show that the higher numbers of denominations present in a municipality shifted from the west coast, including the Randstad, to the places more closely associated with the Bible belt and the Reformed tradition. The 2015 map already resembles the Bible belt much more than the map for 1955 does. This phenomenon will be explored later on in this chapter.

#### 29.3. Explanations for this influence

Now that we have confirmed our hypothesis, we need to form a theory to explain why the local presence of churches from other denominations has an effect on membership numbers, despite the tendency of most denominations to close themselves off from the influence of other types of churches. The first important observation in this regard comes from the Kampen dataset itself. Each chapter in part II discussed the border traffic between denominations, which means that, locally, members of one denomination change their membership to a church of another denomination, which is probably also within travelling distance. Such a dynamic can only occur when local churches from multiple denominations can be found in the vicinity.

Everton (2018) underlines this when he discusses the church as a free market economy. He explains that when there is no government interference on the church, as is true in the Netherlands, churches are free to start new congregations or to close them whenever necessary or appropriate. In his model, pluralism even has a positive effect on church attendance. Since all members can pick and choose the church that best suits their spiritual needs, they are more likely to maintain their membership of that church (p. 26-27). Therefore, places featuring congregations from multiple denominations are more beneficial for the growth of each of those churches than places with fewer churches are.

In addition, Everton states that people who move a lot find it more difficulty to bind themselves to a church, except when they move to a place that is more religious than the one from which they came. This phenomenon is known as religious regionalism: people who move to a more religious place may become more religious themselves, as they tend to accommodate themselves to the culture in which they live (p. 124). This observed effect may explain why churches in Amsterdam or The Hague, which have fewer churches to begin with, experience less growth than churches in a Reformed environment such as Bunschoten or Urk, where religion is much more normalised. These observations seem to indicate a kind of threshold number of churches or Reformed people for stimulating the growth of these groups. If this threshold is not reached, the churches are more likely to shrink and close.

The information presented above helps to answer the main question as to why the presence of other churches may have a positive influence on the growth of one church, but it does not yet explain the difference in values between churches shown in figure 29.1. The churches in this figure can be divided into three groups:

- 1) Churches that grow less when other denominations are present (only the GKN)
- 2) Churches that grow more when other churches are present (CGK, GKv, NGK and HHK)
- 3) Churches that seem unaffected by the presence of other churches (GG and GGN).

This list calls to mind several phenomena that have been discussed at various points throughout this study. The first is the scale proposed by Polderman (1996, p. 251), which lists the way these denominations position themselves in relation to the world. This scale also shows affinities with the church-sect continuum as described by Everton (2018, p. 199), who likewise uses the tension with the world as his defining characteristic. There are also links with the index of segregation presented in chapter 23, where the GKN was shown to be least segregated and the GGN most highly segregated. The level of segregation, in turn, was influenced by the size of the denomination and its pillarisation. All of these factors may be of influence on the effects churches experience from the presence of other denominations:

	Polderman	Segregation	Pillarisation	Size	Influence of other churches
GKN	Citizen	Low segregation	Not pillarised	Large	Negative
CGK	Stranger	Medium segregation	Not pillarised	Medium	Positive
GKv	Pioneer	Medium segregation	Slightly pillarised	Medium	Positive
NGK	Pioneer	Medium segregation	Not pillarised	Small	Positive
GG	Pilgrim	High segregation	Highly pillarised	Medium	Neutral
GGN	Hermit	High segregation	Highly pillarised	Small	Neutral
ННК	Pilgrim	High segregation	Slightly pillarised	Medium	Positive

Table 29.3. Factors that influence the impact of the presence of other churches

On the basis of the above, we can form the following theories regarding the influence experienced by the different denominations from the presence of other churches:

The GKN are a large denomination that finds itself in close proximity to the world. Given the size of the denomination, it is the least segregated of all churches. Throughout much of their history they were highly pillarised, but they became much less so in later years. The GKN are the only denomination that showed a negative influence from the presence of other denominations on their growth. This seems to be largely due to their independent nature; since the denomination is so large, it can create its own market saturation, not requiring the presence of other denominations to thrive. For these reasons, the growth of the GKN seems to be more closely linked to the growth of the Dutch population and to its own development than to the presence of churches from other denominations.

The CGK, GKv, NGK, and HHK all show a positive influence on their membership numbers from the presence of other denominations. The CGK, GKv, and NGK together form a small group with extensive cooperation between them and closely shared histories. None of them are all that pillarised; the CGK and NGK never built their own pillar to begin with, and the GKv started rapidly abandoning its pillar in the 1990s. The GKv and CGK are not highly segregated, the NGK show a slightly higher level of segregation. However, the higher level of the NGK seems to be related more to size than mission. For all three denominations, openness towards the world, lack of pillarisation, and mutual tolerance may influence the way the presence of other churches helps them grow. The HHK is an altogether different story. Given its high level of segregation and its tension towards society, one would expect HHK growth to show less influence from the presence of other denominations in the vicinity. However, chapter 14 showed a lot of traffic from the GG and GGN to the HHK, probably accounting for the greater growth of the HHK with churches from other denominations in the vicinity.

Finally, the GG and GGN are the most highly pillarised and segregated denominations in the dataset. The resulting lifestyle, by which these denominations seclude themselves from the world and other denominations, seems to grant them an independence and self-sufficient growth. As we saw in chapters 10 and 11, GG and GGN growth occurred for the most part independently of the Dutch population and predominantly as a result of high birth rates. This indicates that they do not need churches from other denominations nearby to grow.

#### 29.4. Case study: The Dutch Bible belt

Another important factor related to the presence of churches from other denominations is the existence of the Dutch Bible belt, that strip of land running from Walcheren in the southwest of the Netherlands to the northwest corner of Overijssel around municipalities like Staphorst (Oosterbeek, 2006, p. 7-9). Almost all experientialist churches in the Netherlands are located inside this belt, but orthodox churches are also plentiful there. The existence of the Dutch Bible belt has long been a subject of debate, and information from the Kampen database can now be added to it in order to further explore its definition and its effect on the Dutch Reformed landscape.

29.4.1. Reasons to assume the existence of a Dutch Bible belt First of all, it is necessary to come with a definition of the Bible belt. The distinction we have maintained between orthodox and experientialist denominations is a useful one here, as the Bible belt is generally used in reference to experientialist churches alone – that is, the GG, GGN, OGG, GB, and HHK, and parts of the CGK (Janse, 1985, p. 67). The Bible belt is taken to be that part of the Netherlands where the majority of churches from these denominations can be found. While it should be kept in mind that they usually make up a minority within the general population of those places (Snel, 2007, p. 60), they still form a notable group there, characterised by their theology, attitude towards society, and lifestyle. They are usually described as the refozuil, whose contours are shaped by Reformatorisch Dagblad readers and SGP voters (Tijssen, 2018). In fact, the first national elections in which the SGP gained a significant number of votes, in 1922, is the earliest moment for which the Bible belt as such can be visibly mapped, as it was the first occasion on which the members of the *refozuil* could be measured as a separate group. This method of mapping the Bible belt by SGP votership has become the preferred method:


Figure 29.3. SGP voters in each municipality (Cohen, 2010)

The geographic component to the distribution of different types of churches was first spotted by Geyl (1930) and Kruijt (1947), who saw a division above all between Catholics and Protestants. They discussed this phenomenon in similar ways, showing how the history of the Netherlands had created the geographic differences. When the Reformation began taking root in the Netherlands and people started to become Anabaptists, Lutherans, or Calvinists, this led to the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), as an attempt by the Spanish to counteract these developments. The Spanish army marched on the Netherlands from the south and long occupied present-day Belgium, Noord-Brabant, Limburg, and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, together with parts of Twente and the Achterhoek. After the Eighty Years' War, Protestantism became the public religion in the Netherlands, although Catholicism was also tolerated.

The above narrative has found wide acceptance as an explanation for the Catholic/Protestant divide in the Netherlands. Knippenberg (1992) also uses it as his point of departure for his *Religieuze kaart van Nederland*, and divides the Netherlands into three parts: the Catholic south; an orthodox Protestant belt from the islands in Zeeland to Utrecht, the Veluwe and the north and west of Overijssel, together with parts of Friesland; and, finally, the remainder of the Netherlands, which he classifies as liberal Protestant or secular (p. 1). In his work, Knippenberg shows the distribution of these three groups, displaying the clear divide and naming the strip of land from Zeeland to Friesland the

*Protestantenband* [Protestant belt]. As a caveat, Knippenberg does note that it is more difficult to draw a line between liberal Protestant and orthodox Protestant regions (p. 244).

Snel (2007) also discusses the Bible belt and the reasons for its characteristic geographical pattern. He criticises Knippenberg for combining all Reformed churches into a single group (orthodox Protestants), pleading for experientalists to be added as a separate category in the orthodox Protestant belt (p. 61-62). Snel furthermore argues that while this belt does indeed begin in Zeeland, the northern boundary must be located in Staphorst, as there are no or almost no experientialist churches further north. The reason for the presence of the Bible belt is indeed the history of Catholicism and the Reformation in the Netherlands, explaining why the Bible belt has no churches or members in the middle or eastern parts of Noord-Brabant and Twente (p. 80). Explaining why the Bible belt does not extend into the northern provinces or to Noord-Holland is more difficult. Here Snel draws on the work of Wichers (1965), also mentioned by Knippenberg (1992), who ascribes the lack of experientialist churches in Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, and Noord-Holland to the modernist and non-feudalist nature of these provinces. In Wichers's account, these regions were more independent, individualistic, and liberal-minded, which would have opened possibilities for secularisation and for modern-orthodox churches like the GKN, but left no room for stricter, experientialist churches (Snel, 2007, p. 82-83). Knippenberg hesitates to adopt this hypothesis (p. 245), pointing out that there is a long road separating medieval feudalism from nineteenthcentury Protestantism. Janse (*Reformatorisch Dagblad*, 18 March 2021) describes how the experientialist branch of the Reformed churches was very well-represented in the nineteenth century in the northern Netherlands. Due to a variety of circumstances, however, these church members were increasingly assimilated into the GKN and the left wing of the CGK. This resulted in an absence of congregations that would otherwise have become part of an experientialist denomination.

#### 29.4.2. The Dutch Bible belt in the Kampen dataset

As was mentioned above, SGP votership is usually taken as the main way to measure the Bible belt since it offers a fairly accurate representation of the *refozuil*, and, as Snel (2007) notes, it is also the easiest way, since census records are often unreliable (p. 56) due to the use of self-reported information. However, the Kampen database is based on membership numbers published by the denominations themselves. As such, we have a new way to map the Bible belt. Given that the years of data collection differ for the individual experientialist denominations, we had to use different combinations to make these maps.



29.4. The Dutch Bible belt according to the Kampen dataset

The first maps above show the GG and GGN combined as a percentage of the Dutch population in 1955, when data collection for both churches was consistent and reliable, and, more recently, in 2015. The resulting pattern is very similar to that presented in figure 29.3, mapping SGP voters. Like that map, the present maps show strong concentrations of experientialist members in Zeeland, up into parts of Zuid-Holland, the west of Noord-Brabant, through Utrecht, and up into the Veluwe and parts of Overijssel. There are no

experientialist churches in the rest of Noord-Brabant or in Limburg, almost none in the eastern parts of Overijssel and Gelderland, as well as Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and Noord-Holland.

The second pair of maps, however, also includes data from the GB and the HHK. For this reason, the highest level on the scale runs up to 25%+ instead of 5%+. On these maps, the Bible belt pattern is even clearer, with the most densely populated parts in the Veluwe. Staphorst, which both Snel (2007, p. 51) and Oosterbeek (2006, p. 7-9) had specifically mentioned, now also shows on the map. There are no GG or GGN churches in Staphorst, but there is a HHK church of 5,000 members that used to be GB. Interestingly, the second set of maps also shows places that are not normally considered a part of the Bible belt, including Amsterdam, Flevoland, and parts of Groningen and Friesland. The density of churches is not high, however, and they disappear when the GB is left out of the analysis, suggesting that some parts of the GB may not be as strongly associated with the *refozuil* as others.

I would like to make one addition to the narrative on the Bible belt, which concerns its influence on orthodox churches. As Snel (2007) argues, the Bible belt is a part of Knippenberg's Protestant belt, and these terms cannot be used interchangeably (p. 61-62). They are, however, strongly intertwined. This point can be illustrated using maps showing the distribution of orthodox congregations in the Kampen dataset alone (i.e., the GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK):



29.5. The Dutch orthodoxy belt according to the Kampen dataset

These maps do not include membership numbers from the GG, GGN, HHK, or GB, but the same Bible belt pattern we saw in figure 29.4 still emerges here,

although there is a heavy emphasis on the north as well as northeast Overijssel. Otherwise stated, the majority of places in the Bible belt also include orthodox churches. As I argued earlier on in this chapter, the presence of churches from other denominations proved beneficial for the growth of orthodox congregations, and this finds further confirmation in the findings of this case study. The results can be tested further using a t-test defining the Bible belt as the independent variable and the growth in orthodox denominations as the dependent variable. For this purpose, we define Bible belt places as places with a higher than average concentration of experientialist church members, using different combinations of experientialist denominations to define the Bible belt due to the differences in range for which data were collected:



Figure 29.6. The growth of orthodox churches inside and outside the Bible belt

This graph shows the difference in growth between orthodox churches inside and outside the Bible belt. The greater the difference, the larger the growth inside the Bible belt as opposed to outside, as the t-tests in table 29.4 show:0

	Inside Bible belt	Outside the Bible belt	Diff	Р	Period
	GGGGN	Not GGGGN			1955-2015
GKN	0.31	0.15	0.16	0.1716	
CGK	-0.02	-0.33	0.32	0.1533	
GKv	-0.17	-0.35	0.18	0.3982	
NGK	0.76	-0.57	1.32	0.0007	
	GGGGNGBHHK	Not GGGGNGBHHK	Diff	Р	1970-2015
GKN	-0.02	-0.72	0.71	0.0002	
CGK	0.12	-1.04	1.16	0.0002	
GKv	-0.009	-0.29	0.28	0.3377	
NGK	0.28	-0.46	0.73	0.0301	

Table 29.4. T-tests showing the differences in growth for orthodox churches inside and outside the Bible belt

As it turns out, all orthodox churches benefit from being inside the Bible belt, as the growth inside the Bible belt is generally between 0.2% and 1.3% higher than outside of it, with statistically significant p-values for the NGK in combination with the GG and GGN and for the GKN, CGK, and NGK in combination with the GG, GGN, HHK, and GB. This shows that, even though Snel (2007) argues that the Bible belt forms a part of the Protestant belt and that they are not two separate entities (p. 68), the growth of the orthodox congregations actually seems to be positively influenced by their location in the Bible belt, indicating that the Protestant belt is also in some way reliant on the Bible belt. However, this effect can probably not be ascribed exclusively to the Bible belt. With the exception of Zeeland and northwest Overijssel, the areas in the Bible belt also have a lot of job opportunities, making the entire area attractive to all Dutch citizens.

#### 29.5. Conclusions

The main question for this chapter was whether the nearby presence of churches from other denominations is of influence on the growth of local churches. This question arose in light of the information presented in chapter 23, where it emerged that when denominations shrank, the remaining local churches were usually found in specific places that are generally known to be Reformed strongholds, like Barneveld, Bunschoten, and Amersfoort. The tests in this chapter have shown that the presence of other denominations does indeed have an effect in some cases. There are several probable factors for this effect: border traffic, which is easier with churches from other denominations in the area; a free church market, where people are free to choose the church

that best suits their needs; and the phenomenon that people tend to assimilate to their surroundings, becoming more Reformed in a more Reformed environment. In short, the presence of other groups with similar theologies and lifestyles makes it easier for new groups to arise and for existing groups to thrive. The effect of churches from other denominations was shown to be negative in the GKN, positive in the CGK, GKv, NGK, and HHK, and non-existent in the GG and GGN. The differences in these relationships follow from the vision of the respective denominations regarding their place in the world and the degree of segregation and pillarisation.

This chapter also included a case study on the Bible belt, which indeed exists in the way that is often used to describe it, but never before with membership numbers reported by the denominations themselves. The relationship between the experientialist churches in the Bible belt and orthodox churches proved to be stronger than noted thus far, as orthodox churches experienced more significant growth inside the Bible belt than outside of it.

## 30. The presence of Reformed primary and secondary schools

Christian education has long had a special place in the Netherlands. In the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Kuyper and others worked hard to secure recognition and state funding for Christian schools so that children of religious parents could get a fitting education. The Dutch government now distinguishes between public schools, which have no specific religious foundation, and special schools, which do have a religious or other specific background. Ever since 1917, both types of schools receive government funding, granted they meet the educational prerequisites of the state. The first type of special education is formed by the Protestant and Catholic schools, which came into being after the school struggle (Spoelstra, 2017, p. 34-46). Soon after 1917, the majority of Dutch primary and secondary schools were special schools. When the GKv were founded, they felt that the Christian identity of the existing schools had become too weak and that their ideas on cooperation with different religious people were not acceptable. Therefore, steps were taken to create a body of GKv schools to meet their needs (Spoelstra, 2017, p. 112-126). Experientialist schooling had already been in existence ever since Kersten founded the Vereniaing voor Gereformeerd *Schoolonderwijs* (VGS) in 1921 in order to help schools maintain their identity.

In this chapter, the influence of these special schools on church growth will be examined, based on the assumption that church members will try to live as close to special schools as they can. To this end, the number and distribution of the different types of schools will first be presented, followed by t-tests showing the difference in church growth in places with and without schools, and, finally, we will offer a literature analysis to help explain the observed effects.

#### 30.1. Special education in the Netherlands

According to a CBS (2017) study, almost 70% of Dutch children attend special education schools. This is surprising, certainly in combination with earlier data presented in chapter 2, showing that only 50% of the Dutch population consider themselves religious and that not all Christians send their children to Christian schools (CBS, 2016). Since these data pertain to people eighteen years and older, they interestingly indicate that a significant number of non-religious people still send their children to religious schools. However, as schools themselves admit, Christian identity is not always lived or executed in practice (Verus, 2017). The distribution of the different types of schools is as follows:



Figure 30.1. Special and public education in the Netherlands (CBS, 2017).

Figure 30.1 shows that the number of children in special primary schools rose continually until 1920, and that from the 1930s onwards, they clearly outnumbered those in public schools by almost two to one. The figure shows more Catholic schools than Protestant ones, together with a low percentage of miscellaneous schools, a category that ranges from Muslim and Hindu schools to those with a specific pedagogical approach, like Dalton or Montessori

schools. For secondary schools, the percentage of children in public schools is also much lower than that of the children in special education schools.

Since my study deals exclusively with Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, I have collected information on the location of *Gereformeerde* schools in order to carry out further tests. I have divided these schools into three groups, represented by three organisations: Verus, LVGS (Landelijk Verband van Gereformeerde Schoolverenigingen), and VGS (Vereniging voor Gereformeerd Schoolonderwijs). Verus schools are on the whole generally Christian or Catholic; LVGS is an organisation for GKv schools, which in recent years also started admitting children from other denominational backgrounds; and VGS represents experientialist schools.

Verus, as I mentioned, includes both Protestant and Catholic schools. On their website, they list 4.225 affiliated schools. Further research yielded a list of these schools from *Scholen op de kaart* (2019), an organisation that uses government information to map and list primary and secondary schools. The Verus schools could be divided into Catholic and Protestant schools, where we have taken the latter for the purposes of this study. The locations of the Protestant schools are shown below:



Figure 30.2. The distribution of orthodox Verus primary and secondary schools (DUO, 2021a & DUO, 2021b)

It is clear that Protestant primary schools can be found throughout almost all of the Netherlands, except for areas that earlier chapters in this study identified as predominantly Catholic. Limburg, the eastern parts of Overijssel, and some parts of Noord-Holland and Friesland do not seem to have any Protestant primary schools. Likewise, orthodox secondary schools are spread out evenly across the Protestant belt, whose presence we detected in chapter 29.

The LVGS is an organisation similar to Verus, except in that it is aimed at GKv members. In more recent years, however, LVGS schools have opened up to students and teachers from other denominations, so that LVGS schools are frequently attended by children from the NGK, CGK, or evangelical churches. The LVGS website states that there are 120 primary schools, along with four secondary schools, which have secondary locations in other places. A list of LVGS schools was also obtained, and used to map the schools.



Figure 30.3. The distribution of LVGS primary and secondary schools (DUO, 2021a & DUO, 2021b)

The pattern of primary GKv schools is familiar, showing affinities with the maps of the distribution of GKv churches presented earlier in chapter 18. The four secondary schools and their satellites are spread out across the Netherlands, with main quarters located in Rotterdam, Amersfoort, Groningen, and Zwolle.

Finally, we acquired a list of schools with VGS membership from the organisation. It has 167 primary schools, as well as seven secondary schools with multiple satellites in other places:



Figure 30.4. The distribution of VGS primary and secondary schools (DUO, 2021a & DUO, 2021b)

This map, too, shows a pattern very similar to the one on earlier maps in chapters 20-23, with a clear Bible belt shape showing for the primary schools. Even the secondary schools are predominantly located inside the Bible belt.

30.2. The influence of schools on the distribution of the churches

The theory we want to test here is that local churches will tend to be larger and show more persistent growth with schools present in the vicinity, possibly due to people moving to places with schools and therefore changing their local church membership, and due to higher birth rates for people with school-aged children than for people who have no children in school and tend to be older or are perhaps childless. Of course, the presence of a church also has a considerable influence on the location of new schools, but because we do not have historical statistical data on the schools, we have no way to measure this effect and will therefore limit ourselves to the influence of schools on churches. The most likely scenario, however, is that the church comes first; then schools are founded, and they in turn influence the growth of the church.

The tests in table 30.1 show the difference in church membership as a percentage of the Dutch population with and without primary and secondary Verus or LVGS schools. The value for the GKN was calculated using the Verus schools, for the other denominations the LVGS schools were used:

LVGS/Verus	No primary school	Primary school	Difference	Р
GKN	3.99	8.78	4.79	0
CGK	0.43	0.9	0.47	0
GKv	0.28	1.93	1.65	0
NGK	0.06	0.23	0.17	0
LVGS/Verus	No secondary school	Secondary school	Difference	Р
GKN	6.35	11.37	5.02	0
CGK	0.54	0.81	0.27	0
GKv	0.63	1.94	1.3	0
NGK	0.1	0.12	0.02	0.0879

Table 30.1. The difference in shares of churches with and without Verus or LVGS schools

Table 30.1 immediately makes clear that there is a strong link between the presence of schools and the percentage of Reformed church members in the Netherlands. The GKN, for instance, represents on average 3.99% of the population in places without primary schools, but 8.78% in places where Verus schools are located. The differences are significant across the board, with the once exception of the NGK for secondary schools, as the share of NGK members is very small in both cases. The differences we do see, however, are interesting and very notable:



Figure 30.5. The differences in shares of churches with and without Verus or LVGS schools

VGS	No primary school	Primary school	Difference	Ρ
CGK	0.41	1.2	0.8	0
GG	0.2	2.55	2.35	0
GGN	0.03	0.52	0.49	0
ннк	0.009	0.22	0.21	0
VGS	No secondary school	Secondary school	Difference	Р
CGK	0.49	1.32	0.82	0
GG	0.44	2.98	2.54	0
GGN	0.07	0.81	0.74	0
ппл	0.00	0.07	0.04	~

A similar result emerges for experientialist churches and schools:

Table 30.2. The difference in shares of churches with and without VGS schools

Again, there is a significant difference between the relative share when VGS schools are present in the vicinity and when they are not. The largest difference can be seen with the GG, with only 0.2% GG members in places without VGS primary schools as opposed to 2.55% in places where VGS schools are present. The effect is noticeable for both primary and secondary schools:



Figure 30.6. The differences in shares of churches with and without VGS schools

This figure shows that the effect of the presence of schools can be clearly seen for all denominations, most evidently for the GG and least visibly for the HHK.

On the whole, the presence of VGS secondary schools produces larger differences than VGS primary schools do – in departure from the situation for Verus and LVGS, whose primary schools show a greater effect than secondary schools.

Now that we have established the differences in church size with the presence of schools, we need to determine whether schools also have an impact on the growth of churches. The t-test with the difference for churches whose memberships usually send their children to Verus or LVGS schools will be presented first. The growth for the GKN has been calculated using the presence of Verus schools, and CGK, GKv, and NGK growth has been tested using the presence of LVGS schools, corresponding to their main target group:

Verus/LVGS	No primary school	Primary school	Difference	Р
GKN	0.1	0.811	0.71	0.0002
CGK	-0.07	0.55	0.62	0.0155
GKv	-0.46	0.51	0.98	0.0249
NGK	-0.68	0.28	0.97	0.0034
Verus/LVGS	No secondary school	Secondary school	Difference	Р
Verus/LVGS GKN	No secondary school 0.66	Secondary school 0.9	Difference 0.24	<b>P</b> 0.015
Verus/LVGS GKN CGK	No secondary school 0.66 0.14	Secondary school 0.9 0.79	<b>Difference</b> 0.24 0.65	P 0.015 0.0868
Verus/LVGS GKN CGK GKv	No secondary school           0.66           0.14           -0.04	Secondary school           0.9           0.79           0.7	Difference           0.24           0.65           0.74	P 0.015 0.0868 0.219

Table 30.3. Table with the t-tests for church growth with and without Verus or LVGS schools

The t-tests show that in many cases, churches are shrinking in areas without primary schools, but still show overall growth in places with them. The GKN represent the only denomination to show no such effect. In the case of secondary schools, the GKN and the CGK both show positive overall growth with and without Verus/LVGS schools.

The difference is statistically significant with p<0.05 in almost all cases, with the exception of the effect of secondary schools on the CGK, GKv, and NGK. The absence of a strong effect may well be due to the low number of places with schools compared to the number of places that do have churches but no secondary schools. It may also be related to the way the tests were carried out. The fact of the matter is that LVGS secondary schools almost always attract students from a wide area. Instead of moving to Groningen, people may thus choose to keep living in Bedum, for example, and send their children to school by bike or public transportation. However, the dataset does not account for such situations, perhaps resulting in the rather low calculated effect.





Figure 30.7 shows that all differences are positive, indicating that growth is indeed stronger in areas with Verus or LVGS schools than it is in areas without such facilities. For the CGK and NGK, we see virtually no difference between the influence of primary and secondary schools, but for the GKN and the GKV, primary schools seem to have more impact on church growth.

The results for VGS schools and the growth of experientialist churches are tested below. We have included the CGK here as well, as CGK members can and do send their children to both experientialist and orthodox schools:

VGS	No primary school	Primary school	Difference	Р
CGK	0.05	0.58	0.53	0.0438
GG	-0.41	0.92	1.33	0.0001
GGN	-0.53	0.39	0.92	0.0934
ННК	-1.15	1.55	2.71	0
VGS	No secondary school	Secondary school	Difference	Р
VGS CGK	<b>No secondary school</b> 0.09	Secondary school 1.12	Difference 1.02	<b>P</b> 0.0128
VGS CGK GG	No secondary school 0.09 0.24	Secondary school 1.12 0.63	<b>Difference</b> 1.02 0.39	<b>P</b> 0.0128 0.1975
VGS CGK GG GGN	No secondary school           0.09           0.24           0.37	Secondary school 1.12 0.63 -0.49	Difference           1.02           0.39           -0.08	P         0.0128         0.1975         0.1108

Table 30.4. Table with the t-tests for church growth with and without VGS schools

These tests once again show a difference between growth levels with and without schools, with significant differences for the CGK, GG, and HHK in the

case of primary schools, and for the CGK and HHK in the case of secondary schools. Remarkably, GGN churches show less growth with the presence of secondary schools in the vicinity than they do without their presence. These differences can be illustrated in a more graphic presentation below:



Figure 30.8. The difference in church growth with and without VGS schools

Figure 30.8 shows that the presence of primary schools has a positive correlation with the growth of local churches for all denominations. Secondary schools only show a higher effect than primary schools for the CGK, but have less of an effect in the GG and GGN. The HHK is notable for the significant values for both primary and secondary schools.

### 30.3. Reasons to assume a difference caused by the presence of schools

Reformed denominations have always worked hard to maintain their special education. Janse (1985) already concludes that having special schools stimulates the persistence of church growth (p. 271). As he puts it, churches have a view of reality that increasingly diverges from that held by wider society, but this is not easy to prove empirically. Therefore, as children or teenagers come into contact with opposing world views that make more logical sense to them, their religious world view may not hold up and they may leave the church as a result of this incongruence (p. 50). Similarly, Bisin and Verdier (2000) have created a model to evaluate the influence of socialisation on the religiosity of children and teenagers. Parents have to juggle their own direct influence on the

socialisation of their children and the indirect influence of a secular society (p. 957). This cultural transmission happens inside the family, but also outside the family, through peers and role models. The authors find that if socialisation inside the family is unsuccessful for whatever reason, the child will be influenced by a role model outside the family. The chances of the child remaining a member of the minority group is then equal to the fraction of members of the minority group in the majority population. Parents can, however, exert an influence on this process, for instance by choosing schools of a certain type and thereby exposing their children to mostly in-group cultural influences (p. 959-962). The authors find that this is what parents indeed often do, and that minorities do exert more socialisation efforts than majority members (p. 958). This shows that the choice of a fitting school for children is a conscious or unconscious effort on the part of parents to keep their children with their group, resulting in high numbers of schools and larger and faster growing churches in the vicinity of those schools.

#### 30.4. Conclusions

Overall, the information presented above shows that the presence of schools has a strong positive influence on the size and growth of local churches. LVGS primary schools showed a stronger influence than the association's secondary schools did, but for Verus and VGS schools the situation was reversed. As for growth, the primary schools generally had more impact, probably due to their more even spread. When people move to another place, the presence of a primary school is more important to them than it would be for a secondary school, since young children cannot be expected to travel long distances every day. Since Protestant primary schools are on the whole located in many places where churches are also found, the interaction is much more intertwined and complex. Since such schools can be found almost everywhere, it is difficult to say whether the presence of schools influences the churches or whether, conversely, the presence of the churches influences the schools. The effect is much clearer for secondary schools, since their number is much lower, which probably also accounts for the generally weaker, but nonetheless observable and at times statistically significant, effect.

The reason for the large influence exerted by the presence of schools in the vicinity is that parents find it important to send their children to a school that will teach them the traditions and values of their church. This can increase the chances of their children remaining members of their church through cultural transmission.

#### 31. Conclusions to part IV

The aim of part IV was to address the third sub-question in this study: How can the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015 be explained? In order to do so, we examined a number of conclusions from parts II and III that required further exploration in closer detail, using statistical tests and additional maps and graphs. The chapters in this part have confirmed several hypotheses, but also yielded new and unexpected insights that can certainly add something to the discourse on the various topics. In this concluding chapter, I will summarise the findings and discuss what they mean for our study.

# 31.1. The growth of Reformed denominations is unrelated to that of the Dutch population and churches of other denominations

In the introduction to part IV, I presented the topics that I discussed later on, and already illustrated a first assumption, namely that the development and growth of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands are not correlated with the growth of the overall Dutch population or the growth of the *Hervormde* Church or the Roman Catholic Church. Although the GKN membership in earlier years did develop parallel to the Dutch population, this correlation stopped once the denomination started to shrink. Other denominations never showed growth patterns similar to the Netherlands. This can be explained by the difference in sources of growth: The Dutch population saw a sharp decline in birth rates in the 1960s, meaning that the growth it experienced then was only partly due to a birth surplus. Instead, a significant role was played by immigration. In most of the orthodox Reformed denominations in the Kampen dataset (the GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK), baptism numbers were also on the decline, but not as steeply as birth rates were in the Netherlands. This decline led, directly or indirectly, to a stabilisation or even a decrease in the overall membership. While the gap resulting from declining birth rates in the Dutch population could be compensated by immigration, Reformed churches rarely recruited new members and had a larger outflow than influx. Experientialist denominations (the GG, GGN, HHK) presumably continued to have high birth rates, as suggested by the high proportions of baptised members in them, and did not started shrinking yet during the period investigated. Therefore, as the sources of the growth in the general Dutch population were not present in churches, they showed difficulties keeping a stable membership.

In addition, we examined the difference in development between *Gere-formeerde* denominations and *Hervormde* and Catholic churches, based on information provided by the CBS (2016). Since the *Gereformeerde* denominations

have a different history, they also show different patterns of development. The Roman Catholic Church and the NHK were the largest churches in the Kingdom of the Netherlands for centuries, at 40% and 60% of the total population, respectively. Membership was by default. By the twentieth century, however, the NHK started losing large numbers of members, in part due to the newly established GKN, but also in part because of rising numbers of secular people. The loss came guite suddenly, and the NHK share of the Dutch population plummeted from 55% in 1890 to 23% in 1975. The Roman Catholic Church kept growing until the 1960s, but then membership started dropping drastically. *Gereformeerde* denominations have a tendency to rise, grow fiercely, stabilise. and then decline. Since there were and are many different Gereformeerde denominations, this pattern could be observed again and again. This initial rise and stabilisation is invisible in the NHK and in the Roman Catholic Church, as they are long established and historically always had a large share of the Dutch population, apart from a remainder of around 6%, which was made up of Lutherans, Anabaptists, Remonstrants, and Jewish people. Gereformeerde denominations were founded later and had to recruit members after their establishment. Following initial growth, numbers stabilise and, in a number of cases, decline. This pattern, in fact, formed the topic of the next chapter in part IV.

#### 31.2. All Reformed denominations go through the same development

In chapter 26, I argued that all Reformed – that is, *Gereformeerd* – denominations in the Kampen database go through the same development, as described above. Accordingly, I proposed a model with five phases of church membership development: growth, conflict, continuity, decline, and closure. This model was mapped onto the denominations with available data, with their related years and growth rates. All denominations turned out to have had a period of growth and continuity, although for some these lasted longer than they did for others. The GKN, GKv, GG, and GGN also showed to have passed through one or more periods of conflict ending in schism. Most of these conflicts occurred during the growth phase, when churches are still busy defining themselves and trying to find their group dynamics. The GKv are the only exception in that they also had two schisms during their decline period, although these schisms were of a lower scale than the Vrijmaking of 1944 or the Scheuring of 1967, for instance. Schisms seemed to occur less frequently in later years, perhaps showing an attitude shift in the church from a focus on absolute truth to a focus on unity. Moreover, schisms seemed to take place less when membership numbers were not growing. One theory on the cause of the frequency of conflict is that churches tend to go from being sect-like (at high tension with society) to being church-like (more in harmony with the majority population). During this shift, a group of members often feel displaced and want to restore the church to its

sect-like status. But since it is difficult to maintain membership while at high tension with society, these new churches generally become less strict and move to a more church-like type.

Phases of continuity seem to be unavoidable, as the fire of the first generations who fought for their new denomination cools down a little and stable membership numbers have been reached. By then, a denomination can remain stable for a very long time. The GG and GGN are examples of this, as their membership numbers were still slightly growing in 2015. However, due to declining birth rates, the loss of members to other denominations, and secularisation, the other denominations in the dataset – i.e., the GKN, CGK, GKv, NGK, and GB – were shrinking notably. The GKN merged with the NHK and ELK to form the PKN in 2004 after a period of marked membership decline, and the GKv and NGK recently (2020) started out on a process of unification. Looking at the increasing numbers of members who leave the GG and GGN, it seems likely that they too will start losing members sometime in the future, although the truth of this assumption will have to be borne out by later data.

### 31.3. Experientialist churches have more persistent growth than orthodox churches do

As the previous chapter clearly showed, a distinction can often be made in the development of orthodox denominations (GKN, CGK, GKv, and NGK) and experientialist denominations (GG, GGN, HHK, and GB). This distinction cuts across their history and theology, but also across their statistical profile, in several respects: membership development, the proportion of baptised to confessing members, birth rates, and border traffic. In the first place, experientialist denominations showed a continued increase in membership numbers. Even though these numbers later stabilised and the growth did not remain as high as it was in the beginning, experientialist denominations were not shrinking yet in 2015, while orthodox denominations were. Secondly, orthodox denominations generally started out with even proportions of baptised members and confessing members, but the make-up of each changed until all orthodox denominations reached a proportion of 35/65 in 2015. Experientialist denominations generally stayed evenly divided. In addition, and perhaps as the cause of this, experientialist denominations continued showing high birth rates, whereas most orthodox denominations more or less followed the Dutch population with decreasing birth rates.

The reason for these differences can be located in the nature of the respective denominations. Most literature ascribes the continuing growth of experientialist type churches to their strictness; as the cost of joining such a church is high, only those who really want to participate become members. Membership also means a lot to them, and free-riding is discouraged. Due to their distinct lifestyle, with a variety of rules for clothing, television ownership, and drug and alcohol use, they form a characteristic group in society. This sets members of experientialist churches clearly apart from non-members and restricts nonmember contact. Therefore, in-group unity and cohesion is strong and identity well-defined. All of this, together with the important factor of disapproving attitudes towards the use of contraception, stimulates social and cultural persistence, and helps them maintain their identity and membership.

#### 31.4. Churches can mostly be found in areas of moderate urbanisation

The next chapter investigated the geographical distribution of local churches. In part III, we presented lists showing the municipalities with the largest Reformed membership, in absolute values as well as proportional shares. One notable conclusion drawn in this chapter was that a lot of these places were either large towns or small cities. Although some denominations, and the GKN and CGK in particular, used to have congregations in large cities, those congregations shrank considerably. Places like Urk, Bunschoten, and Staphorst showed the highest percentage of Reformed membership. This shift yielded the hypothesis that churches followed suit in the Dutch suburbanisation process, and that they are most predominant in places of moderate urbanisation. This hypothesis proved testable and turned out to be correct. Not only were churches more highly represent in moderately urbanised places, their growth was also shown to be more persistent there. Large cities are therefore difficult environments for churches to thrive in, due in part to high degrees of secularisation, high immigration numbers, few families with children, and the absence of other churches. At the other end of the spectrum, rural areas likewise turned out to be difficult places for churches as the population there aged rapidly and increased mobility led to an exodus of young people from them. In our study, the GGN and GB congregations were the only ones to reflect a large presence and growth in rural areas.

### 31.5. Churches show more persistent growth with churches from other denominations nearby

A further observation that was made in part III was that most of the places in which Reformed churches constituted a notable part of the population had multiple denominations, with, for example, six different denominations in places like Kampen, Urk, and Veenendaal in 2015, and five in Katwijk, Barneveld, and Apeldoorn. This led us to assume that churches somehow benefit from settlement in places with churches from other denominations in the vicinity. This chapter indeed found some correlation between the growth of churches and the presence of churches from other denominations. The CGK, GKv, NGK, and HHK

in particular benefited from this effect. The impact was much smaller in the GG and GGN, and even negative in the GKN.

We proposed that this distribution could be accounted for in the size and the degree of segregation and pillarisation of the respective denominations. Since the GKN were so large a denomination, they operated mostly independently and were not influenced by the comings and goings of other, smaller denominations in the area. The CGK, GKv, and NGK are much smaller in size and seemed to be more dependent on each other and other churches for their size and growth. Reasons for this positive influence can be located in border traffic, for instance, which is only possible when other denominations are present nearby, and in a phenomenon called religious regionalism, which means that people who move to a new place adapt to the culture of that place. If the new place to which they move happens to have a highly Reformed identity, it becomes easier for these new inhabitants to become Reformed as well. Effects of this phenomenon were much less visible in the GG and GGN, which are highly pillarised and segregated, and, as part II likewise showed, secured their own growth.

#### 31.6. The influence of the Dutch Bible belt

A distinct part of the chapter on the influence of other denominations in the area was devoted to the existence and influence of the Dutch Bible belt. The Bible belt is a strip of land in the Netherlands stretching from Walcheren to Staphorst featuring a notable number of experientialist churches and members. Scholars typically mapped the boundaries of this area by charting SGP votership, but the Kampen dataset now offers a new method. The mapping of the membership of GG, GGN, HHK, and GB churches using our dataset showed the familiar Bible belt shape. Therefore, this part of my study showed that the common definition of the Bible belt finds corroboration in the membership administration provided by the churches themselves. An additional finding was the presence of an orthodoxy belt, which is at least as typical as the Bible belt. In its most concentrated form, this orthodoxy belt is found in the Veluwe, western Gelderland, the Vechtdal in Overijssel, Flevoland, and the northern provinces. There are, however, also clusters in Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, the west of Noord-Brabant, and Utrecht. This means that orthodox churches are present throughout the entire experientialist Bible belt. Further investigation in fact revealed that orthodox churches showed more persistent and higher growth inside than outside the experientialist Bible belt, showing that even though experientialist churches themselves showed little influence from the presence of other churches in the vicinity, conversely, the presence of experientialist churches did positively influence the growth of orthodox churches. This growth is probably not due to border traffic, which is rare between orthodox and experientialist churches, but is probably related to the effect of religious regionalism: it is easier for people to be and remain religious in an environment that is itself already markedly religious.

#### 31.7. The presence of schools

A final hypothesis that was tested concerned the close relationship between the geographical distribution of churches and their respective schools. In the early twentieth century. Christian education came to receive equal protection and funding from the government as public education. Apart from generally Protestant or Catholic schools, also experientialist schools had already been around for some time, while the *Vrijmaking* issued in the establishment of GKv schools. These three groups of schools were tested against the size and growth of their corresponding churches. Not surprisingly, membership shares were found to be higher, with undisputable statistical significance, in the vicinity of schools, although church growth also benefited from schools, albeit not as significantly. The main reason why Reformed schooling is deemed so important is because of cultural transmission. Parents want to convey their religious lifestyle to their children. If parents do not exert any influence on the formation of their children, children will look to random peers and role models they meet in their day-to-day environment. Accordingly, the chance of these children becoming religious or church members is equal to the ratio of their groups as a percentage of the Dutch population. Since this percentage is generally not high, parents either consciously or subconsciously influence their children's environment by sending them to schools with high numbers of in-group people. Reformed schools, combined with faith-based child-rearing at home and church attendance, greatly improve the chance of children remaining in-group members.

#### 31.8. Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, there are many answers to the question posed in its introduction. Just as the spatio-temporal development of the denominations in the Kampen dataset is complex and varied, so are possible explanations for that development. There are, however, some observations that can be made.

- 1. The growth and decline of Reformed denominations follow a different pattern than the Dutch population and other types of churches.
- 2. Denominations initially grow due to their newness and the fire of their frontmen. This enthusiasm attracts new members from other denominations.
- 3. When the fire dies down, people start leaving and few new members are recruited.

- 4. If there is any growth at all, it is due to high rates of birth. If these rates decrease, total membership numbers will drop accordingly.
- 5. Strict churches are more successful in binding their members, due in part to their strictness, but also, and in significant measure, to their views on society and contraception.
- 6. A clear, well-defined identity is important in maintaining social and cultural persistence.
- 7. Churches have the largest presence in places of medium urbanisation. The demographic constitution of cities departs too much from that of churches for the latter to persist
- 8. The general Dutch exodus to the suburbs and from the country influenced church membership as well.
- 9. Orthodox churches benefit from the presence of churches from other denominations, with the exception of the GKN, which showed an independent development.
- 10. The Bible belt exists.
- 11. An orthodox Bible belt can also be detected and defined.
- 12. The presence of primary and secondary education has a positive correlation with the size and growth of Reformed churches.

In short, the Reformed denominations described in the Kampen database can be seen as a small sub-group of the Dutch population which operates mostly independently of it. Their persistent growth must be attributed to birth rates, not to incoming membership. However, birth rates did show some traces of influence from the overall decrease in the Dutch population, and had a negative influence on the membership numbers of orthodox denominations. Reformed churches can be found in most places of the Netherlands, except for eastern Noord-Brabant, Limburg, the north of Noord-Holland, and eastern Overijssel and Gelderland. Churches were found to be most frequently located in places of moderate urbanisation (i.e., suburbs, large towns, small cities) inside the experientialist or orthodox Bible belts. They generally helped each other persist, as did the presence of Reformed education. Schools and the presence of churches from other denominations showed themselves to be important factors ensuring church size and growth.

#### Part V Conclusions

The aim of this study was to describe, as exhaustively as possible, the statistical characteristics of the *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015. As we saw, these denominations formed a notable minority in Dutch society, comprising 10% of the population at their peak. Nevertheless, the *Gereformeerde* denominations have a varied and interesting history and are still a distinct part of Dutch society. Therefore, making an overview of their temporal and geographical development represents a useful addition to the existing discourse. Following the lead of Knippenberg (1992) and Bernt & Berghuijs (2016), I have tried to give an overview of the development of these denominations and an explanation for their growth, demographic makeup, and geographical distribution. To this end, I developed the following main research question:

What does the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like, and how can it be explained?

That question was in turn divided into three sub-questions:

- 1. What does the temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 2. What does the spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 3. How can the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 be explained?

All of the statistics and information pertaining to these questions can be found in the preceding parts of this study, but in this final chapter I will summarise and evaluate them, starting with an overview of the research questions and my responses to them.

### 32.1. The temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015

This first question was addressed in detail in part II, and the main findings can be summarised as follows:

The first denomination in the dataset are the GKN churches, which were founded in 1892 when two churches that had split off from the NHK merged. In 2004, the GKN joined the NHK again, this time together with the ELK, so as to form the PKN. GKN history saw two schisms. The first was a small one that took place in 1926, when several ministers and some of the members of their congregations established a new denomination, which nevertheless disbanded and returned to the NHK in 1946. The second secession took place in 1944, and led to the emergence of the GKv. The GKN constitute the largest denomination in the database, with 328.240 members in 1892, 874.591 at their peak in 1974. and 650,892 in 2003, the final year before their merger. In 1926, some 5,000 members left to join the GKNh, while around 80,000 members joined the GKv following the Vrijmaking of 1944. The GKN started out with 55% baptised members and 45% confessing members in 1900, but by 2003, the numbers had shifted to 40% and 60%, respectively. This was due in part to the sudden drop in birth rates around 1974, right around the time the denomination stopped growing. The death rate, on the other hand, gradually rose, Overall, the GKN lost more members than they gained, but for a number of years the data are incomplete and possibly not very reliable. In later years, many of the people who left the GKN did not go to another church. The majority of new members they did gain came from the NHK, but there was also an influx from the GKv, together with a small proportion of new members who had not been church members before. Information on the destination of outgoing GKN members was not available from the denomination's own administration, but other available information gave rise to the assumption that the traffic with the NHK went equally both ways. In addition, some members left for the CGK, but other denominations were a much less popular destination. The highest number of local churches the GKN ever had was 850. In 1892, the average congregation size was 489 members, but this number rose to 1,080 in 1977, before dropping.

The CGK have their roots in *afaescheiden* churches that refused to join the GKN at the establishment of the latter denomination in 1892. At the time, the CGK denomination only had three local congregations. Data collection started in 1919, by which time the CGK had grown to 9,976 members, increasing rapidly in the subsequent decades to reach 76,276 by their peak in 1985, before slowly dropping to 71,869 members in 2015. Baptised members and confessing members started out at 52% and 48%, respectively, but by 2015, the CGK membership had 62% confessing members and 38% baptised members. The birth rate in the denomination slowly declined starting in 1985, while death rates gradually increased. Initially, the CGK consistently had a positive balance of incoming and outgoing members, but in 2012 the balance fell below zero due to the higher number of members who left. Incoming CGK members generally came from the GKN and NHK, but in later years an increasing number also hailed from the GKy as well as the GG. When people left the CGK, the NHK and GKN were popular destinations. Other than that, evangelical churches and undefined churches also drew outgoing CGK members. The number of local CGK congregations increased from three in 1892 to 188 in 2000, and finally settled on 177 in 2015. Average congregation size grew over that time from 200 to 450 members.

As we saw earlier, the GKv emerged from the GKN, starting with around 80,000 members. They grew rapidly to 128,227 by 2003, before declining again to 120,295 members in 2015. In the meantime, the denomination had lost a total of almost 8,000 members in the late 1960s due to a schism resulting in the NGK, but continued its growth after that. The GKv never had more baptised members than confessing members, but started out with a ratio of 47% to 52%. Later on, the number of baptised members dropped until in 2015 the GKv membership consisted of 35% baptised members and 65% confessing members. The number of baptisms gradually declined from the 1980s onwards, while the death rate started out and remained fairly low. In addition to falling birth rates. the GKv also showed a large negative balance in border traffic. The number of outgoing members grew strongly through the years, while the number of new members remained low but stable. Some of the incoming members came from the NGK and GKN, and a growing number from the CGK and PKN. Outgoing GKv members increasingly joined the NGK and CGK. Some went to the PKN, but a certain number also left for undefined churches, presumably evangelical churches, or did not register their destination. The highest number of local churches the GKv ever had was 300, but that number dropped to slightly over 260 in 2015, with an average congregation size rising from 300 to 450 members.

The NGK represent one of the youngest and smallest denominations in the database. They issued from the GKv, being founded in 1967. As their numbers grew and finally stabilised, they had 30,000 members, growing to 33,366 in 2012, and settling at 32,926 in 2015. They always had more confessing members than baptised members, starting with a share of 51% confessing members to 46% baptised members. By 2015, the ratio had become 65/35. The number of baptisms gradually dropped, but the death rate remained stable. The NGK also showed a positive balance for border traffic, meaning that there were more incoming than outgoing members. Incoming members increasingly came from the GKv, but consistently also found their way there from the CGK and PKN. A few NGK members left each year for the GKv and CGK, but also for the PKN churches and, increasingly, for the evangelical movement. Overall, the NGK denomination size ranged between 93 and 96 local churches; in 2015, there were 88 congregations. The average church size grew from 300 in 1970 to 380 in 2015.

The GG were the first experientialist denomination described, and also showed a different temporal development. Founded in 1907, they did not start data collection until 1948, which has therefore been taken as the first year for our analysis. The GG are a medium-sized denomination, with 56,781 members in 1948, increasing to 106,897 by 2015. In 1953, almost 8,000 members left the GG to form a new denomination. Nevertheless, the GG continued their growth through the years. The share of baptised members decreased from 51% in 1948 to 44% in 2015, as the share of confessing members grew from 48% to 55%.

Unfortunately, there is very little information available on birth rates in the GG, but they may be assumed to have been very high, as the balance of border traffic was negative, with increasing numbers leaving, predominantly to the NHK/HHK, and a stable influx from the GGN and OGG. The GG had 120 local churches in 1948, but this number grew to 160 in 1988, and was at 154 in 2015. Local churches used to average 450 members, but this number rose to nearly 700 members in more recent years.

The GGN are the denomination that emerged from the GG in 1953, and they started collecting data immediately from their foundation. In its first year, the denomination had 8,817 members, but by 2015 it had grown to 24,182, indicating strong, continued growth. A schism took place in 1981, when around 3,000 members from some three local churches left to form the GGN (bv). Most of these members returned in 2008-2009, but some still remained separated. The GGN was evenly split between baptised members and confessing members, but additional demographic statistics are unfortunately not available. Although it seems reasonable to assume a high rate of birth, that cannot be proved. Border traffic with the GG can, however, be reconstructed, and seems to have been one-sided; there were GGN members going to the GG, but very few went in the other direction. The GGN had around 50 local congregations, with an average membership of 250 to 500 members. This number was consistently on the rise throughout the years studied.

The HHK is another experientialist denomination, having been formed by concerned NHK members who opposed collaboration with the GKN in the establishment of the PKN. Many HHK members probably were members of the GB prior to the foundation of their new denomination. Information is available from 2010 to 2015, so there are few statistics to go by, although the information that is available is certainly of note. The HHK grew from 56,418 to 58,821 members, with no schisms or radical changes. The makeup of the denomination was split between 52% baptised members and 46% confessing members. There is unfortunately no other demographic information available, although some border traffic numbers could be reconstructed using the matching information from the other denominations, which showed many incoming HHK members originating from the GG, and lower numbers from the CGK. There was some returning traffic, but that number was much smaller. The HHK had 117 local churches, with an average of 500 members.

Finally, we also included the GB in the dataset, although it is not a denomination in its own right and the data for it are not very reliable. For this reason, only very little of that data was used. We know that the GB was fairly large, with an estimated peak of 675,000 members, although membership declined sharply in later years, due in part to the formation of the HHK, but also because of an overall loss of members.

### 32.2. The spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015

Part III of this study dealt with the geographical development of the denominations in the Kampen database. This development was described for each denomination using maps and graphs showing the distribution of membership as a percentage of the Dutch population on the national, provincial, and municipal levels, together with analyses of the influence of urbanisation, and the degree of segregation.

The GKN were described first. As it turned out, the GKN could be found throughout almost all of the Netherlands, with the exception of the Catholic south. Friesland seems to be their biggest stronghold, with the highest absolute and relative membership numbers. When the GKN began, they had large membership numbers in the cities, like Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam, but they diminished later and the GKN came to be found more in smaller places, still predominantly in Friesland and Groningen. In 1900, the GKN had the highest relative membership numbers in Bunschoten, Urk, and Leiderdorp, but by 2003, it was Dongeradeel, Ferwerderadeel, and Grootegast that figured at the top of the list. The urbanisation analysis showed that the GKN indeed disappeared from the largest four cities, but continued for a time in other cities, before becoming larger in slightly urbanised areas. The GKN showed a fairly low segregation level, with only 40% of the membership having to move in order to attain a homogeneous distribution.

The CGK were found in a sash across the country, from Zeeland to Zuid-Holland, parts of Utrecht, Flevoland, the west of Gelderland, and Overijssel, and in the northern provinces. They showed to be fairly evenly divided over the provinces, but the largest concentration of members could be found in Zuid-Holland. Bunschoten, Grootegast, and Oud-Beijerland had the highest relative CGK numbers in 1920, but by 2015, the places figuring at the top of the list were Urk and Sliedrecht. Bunschoten still came in third. Like the GKN, the CGK have never had a strong presence in the G4, or in rural areas, but tended to be more in places of moderate and high urbanisation. The denomination's segregation values decreased as the denomination grew, with 60% of CGK members having to move to create an even distribution.

The GKv showed a distribution similar to that of the CGK, with members in Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, the west of Noord-Brabant, Utrecht, Flevoland, the west of Gelderland, Overijssel, and the northern provinces. The GKv were mostly concentrated in Overijssel, especially the Vechtdal, and in Groningen. In their early years, the GKv were relatively largest in Bunschoten, Hattem, and Kampen, but in 2015, the denomination's strongholds had become Bunschoten, Menterwolde, and Hardenberg. The GKv showed to have very few members in the G4 and in rural areas, but more in cities and towns. The GKv segregation

was comparable to that of the CGK, with 60% of members having to move for a homogeneous spread.

The NGK were found to be small and therefore not a large percentage of the total population, but the maps still showed members around Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and western Overijssel and Flevoland. The denomination was mostly absent from the southern and northern provinces. The largest congregations showed in Kampen, Bunschoten, and Wezep in Oldebroek. Although NGK members seemed to cluster around large cities, they did not live in those cities as such, as numbers for the G4 were very low, comparable to what they were for rural areas, in fact. Instead, highly urbanised and moderately urbanised areas proved popular, meaning mostly cities, although NGK members could also be found in towns. Despite their size, the NGK had segregation levels resembling that of the CGK and GKv, at 65%.

The GG was the first denomination in the dataset to clearly show the Bible belt shape, as Zeeland, Zuid-Holland, northwest Noord-Brabant, Utrecht, the west of Gelderland, and Overijssel all showed GG members, but the northern provinces, the north of Noord-Holland, the remainder of Noord-Brabant, and all of Limburg were virtually devoid of them. By far the largest share of members could be found in Zeeland and Zuid-Holland, with the largest GG communities as a percentage of the Dutch population in places like Dirksland, Rijssen, and Reimerswaal in 1950, and again Rijssen and Reimerswaal in 2015, this time joined by Scherpenzeel (Gld). The GG were shown to be mostly absent from the G4, but aside from that, the denomination was spread out evenly over the other areas of different levels of urbanisation. Segregation for the GG was fairly high, with 75% of members having to move for an even spread.

The GGN resembled the GG in a lot of ways, showing the same distribution over the Bible belt. They too had a high representation in Zeeland and Zuid-Holland, and an even heavier concentration than the GG in Gelderland. The GGN's largest relative numbers could be found in Neder-Betuwe, Scherpenzeel (Gld), and Alblasserdam in 1960. In 2015, Barneveld replaced Scherpenzeel, but the other two municipalities remained. The GGN, even more so than other denominations, were absent from the G4. Many of the people who had been living in large cities joined the schism of 1981, so that most people lived in areas of slight urbanisation or rural areas. Due to the denomination's size, its segregation was high, at 85%-90%.

The HHK followed a distribution similar to the GG and GGN, once again showing a clear Bible belt pattern. Gelderland and Zuid-Holland were the most popular provinces for the HHK, and the largest relative numbers of members could be found in Staphorst, Neder-Betuwe, and Zaltbommel. Like the GGN, the HHK membership favoured rural areas and areas of slight urbanisation.

The GB was much larger than most of the above denominations, and, unlike the actual denominations on the experientialist side of the spectrum, was not limited to the Bible Belt, but also had large congregations in the north. Gelderland, Utrecht, and Zuid-Holland all showed to be provinces with many GB members. In 1975, the largest GB municipalities as a share of the Dutch population were Zederik, Goedereede, and Graafstroom; by 2015, Graafstroom had become the largest, and was now joined by Liesveld and Giessenlanden. The GB generally had very large churches in small towns, which also found reflection in the degree of urbanisation; the largest part of the GB was found to be living in areas of little urbanisation. The GB had a higher segregation level than orthodox denominations, and had a dissimilarity index comparable to that of the GG, at around 0.75.

32.3. Explanations for the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015

The final part of this study looked into possible explanations for the findings in parts II and III by testing several hypotheses. A number of conclusions were drawn. First, the growth of the Gereformeerde denominations is not related to that of the general Dutch population or of other denominations. Instead, they all follow their own, similar pattern: a new denomination is founded, experiences strong growth, stabilises, and then starts to decline, after which it sometimes merges with another denomination. During the period of growth, conflicts leading to a schism are not uncommon. Denominations initially grow by attracting members from other denominations to their new movement, but after the enthusiasm dies down, their main source of growth is births. If the birth rate declines, denominations generally also start to shrink. While the Dutch population can still grow due to immigration, churches attract almost no new members. On the contrary, they tend to lose large numbers, either to other sometimes Reformed – denominations or to secularisation, as not all members who leave join another church. In order to deal with secularisation, it seems that churches need to walk a fine line when it comes to the tension in which they live with society. They need to be different enough for members to see the value of belonging to a different group, but not so different that membership cost becomes too high. In that respect, the social cohesion and strong group identity generated by the strictness of experientialist churches is a stimulating factor in social and cultural persistence. Of course, the maintenance or growth of membership numbers is not the main aim of churches. There are many other, more religiously inspired reasons for constantly reassessing the relationship between church and society, as has often happened in the past.

The geographical distribution of Reformed denominations can be explained partly by historical factors and partly by other factors. On the historical level, we must therefore note that Reformed denominations can be found in places that are not Catholic (Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and parts in eastern Overijssel and Gelderland, all of which were made Catholic by the Spanish during the Eighty Years' War), or largely non-religious (Noord-Holland, where Christianity never firmly took root). One of the other factors is urbanisation; churches have a hard time thriving in large cities, as church members are usually white, middle-class people with families, while city dwellers are often immigrants, upper or lower class people, and singles. In earlier years, the situation was different, as labourers left rural areas for cities and filled the churches there. The suburbanisation move that occurred in the Netherlands in the 1960s also took place in churches, and was even stronger there, so that churches are now predominantly present in places of moderate urbanisation. Rural areas, which underwent a large exodus of the overall population, also had fewer church members than places of moderate urbanisation did, although this pattern did not apply for the GGN, HHK, and GB. Another factor influencing the geographical distribution of the denominations is their tendency to cluster. The presence of other denominations seemed to benefit the size and growth of churches; as most of an area is already Reformed, all Reformed churches in that area will be stimulated in their social and cultural persistence. Finally, the location of Reformed schools affiliated with particular denominations also showed a strong relationship with the size and growth of those churches, although the location of such schools is itself, of course, also heavily influenced by the distribution of the denominations.

#### 32.4. Evaluation

All in all, a large number of the relevant factors in the temporal and spatial development of the denominations in the Kampen dataset can be explained, which is very satisfying. As was stated in the introduction to this work, our hope was that this study would add something valuable to the discourse on statistical church development, due to the nature of the data, which were collected from the official administration of the denominations themselves, and were not the subjective, self-reported member data. This approach seems to have worked quite well, and the data and results bear no shocking differences compared to earlier studies, based as they were on the subjective census data, confirming the reliability of our data. The only exception related to the information gathered for the GB, whose reliability remains uncertain. However, we have attempted to supplement the work of Janse (1985) and Smelik (2003) for the mapping of GB members. An inherent problem of the GB's administration system is that its data are much harder to track than they are for other Reformed denominations, as the GB does not have exclusive membership and defines membership in a different way than actual denominations do. GB adherents do not necessarily coincide with members, but these adherents are the group that we have tried to measure in this study and that is most difficult to define. While not all details may be correct, the data seemed largely reliable in the bigger picture. Overall, the statistical descriptions and tests in my study yielded a nice overview of the development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands, and gave us more information on their numerical and geographical properties, as well as adding a number of interesting insights based on the hypotheses discussed in part IV.

Although the end of this study does not leave us with strange, unexplained phenomena or puzzling questions, ideas for further research remain. The first thing to be noted is that there still is information missing for some denominations in the Kampen database. The GGN, HHK, and GB, for instance, have not published birth rates, which formed an important part of the analysis but could only be guessed at. Border traffic figures are also missing for these same denominations, so that the further collection of such data might also add greater insight. The present findings could also gain depth if one were to study other aspects, like the importance of views on membership in orthodox and experientialist denominations, and the influence of these views on the proportion of baptised to confessing members. Given these shortcomings, I would like to advocate for the accurate and detailed collection of data. While none of the absent data can be retrieved for the period from 1892 to the present, denominations can, from now on, make sure that their data collection is reliable and that it can be used for further research. The collection of these data is important for understanding what happened in the past, and it can help us to understand what needs to happen in the future. Another factor of note in data collection relates to the number of members who are not actively involved in the church. Since they are still registered in the statistics, they make these statistics less reliable, since it is impossible to determine how many such dormant members there actually are.

In the same vein, the end of the analysis of this study is located in 2015, but in the meantime, the respective denominations have continued to develop. The GKv synod, for instance, decided to allow women in office and to work towards a merger with the NGK. Another significant statistical development is constituted by the first year that the GG lost members (122 in total, Nederlands Dagblad, June 4, 2019). These changes will have their consequences for the statistical development of the denominations, and it would clearly not be without merit to see my study repeated at a later date to determine the precise influence of these developments and what they mean for the denominations. More work could also be done so as to reconstruct the data for smaller denominations which split off at different points in time, like the GKNh, GKN, DGK, and GGN (by). Another valuable aspect that may be expanded are the time periods for which the spatial descriptions are given. For now, only relatively large time intervals could be examined in some detail due to lack of space. In a study aimed specifically at the spatial development of Reformed denominations, the length of these periods could be narrowed down.

In addition, the Kampen dataset contains valuable information on membership numbers for local churches and denominations, but no additional data, so that the analyses and descriptions given in this work may lack a personal aspect. Therefore, collecting statistics on the demographic properties of the churches, like age, level of education, profession, etc., could add a sociological angle to the analysis that is now missing. One such angle relates to the fact that the GG track the gender of their members, where women outnumber men. This is a phenomenon that is deserving of further exploration. Of course, there may be plenty of other ways to follow up on the results of my study, but these were the main questions that I was left with myself. It is my hope that someone will one day carry them out.

#### 32.5. Discussion and conclusion

In addressing the three questions posed at the beginning of this study and presenting all the information available in the Kampen dataset, I hope to have added something to the field of study. The gap described in chapter 1 has now been filled somewhat. At the time of writing, the most recent geographical description of Reformed denominations in the Netherlands date from almost thirty years ago (Knippenberg, 1992), and a precise and detailed description of the development of membership numbers, border traffic, and demographic statistics had never been given. All the bits and pieces of available information scattered throughout have now been collected and presented here in this one work.

Although the goals of this study were largely descriptive and theoretical, they may also have value for denominations and local churches. For the former, my study may have made clear how different denominations have influenced each other, how they are intertwined, and how their shared history has influenced who they are now. Such a clearer image of the past may help them envisage how they can shape their future. My study shows many examples of the way schisms can change the development of membership numbers and the geographical distribution of denominations. All of this information may give some clarity in planning a possible merger or disbandment or in taking other big decisions on different courses of action.

The same goes for local churches. Many churches are dealing with decreasing membership numbers and are looking for ways to deal with this phenomenon. The methods applied in my study may be of use to them. Churches can use the information available in the Kampen dataset, which may be found at the Netherlands institute for permanent access to digital research resources (DANS), together with any additional information collected by the local secretary, as well as the methods I used to determine the source of the growth or lack thereof in their congregation. Such information can be of help, because it gives congregations a much more detailed picture of their situation and what to do with it. For example, lack of growth due to an older population with low birth rates should be treated altogether differently from a lack of growth due to disappearing baptised members. Although the absence of statistical growth does not necessarily exclude the absence of spiritual growth in a local congregation, it may be worthwhile identifying the source of the decrease in order to be able to decide what to do with it. The Kampen dataset also makes it possible to compare the growth of one congregation with other congregations or the entire denomination in order to put the local situation into perspective.

I would like to add that, although the future of the church may not look too bright based on my research, with decreasing membership numbers and growing numbers for outgoing members, the situation may not be as bad as people fear. For example, the reduction in numbers can in significant measure be ascribed to diminishing birth rates. This is, if not a natural phenomenon, a very common one at least, and only shows that Reformed church members form a part of Dutch society as a whole. On top of that, many of the people who leave denominations actually go to join another one. The numbers for people changing denominational affiliation are much higher than they are for people actually leaving the church altogether. While this is not necessarily good news for individual denominations, in the bigger picture of the entire church body, it does mean that many members are not ready to leave the church as a whole.

At the same time, it cannot hurt to pay attention to the people who indeed decide to leave the church behind. It should be kept in mind that church members have increasing numbers of contacts outside the church, and that all the groups in which they participate are vying for their attention. It requires a lot of work for each and every church to remain relevant to all these people. On the one hand, a church needs to be different enough from society to be needed and to give members something they cannot find elsewhere; on the other hand, they should not be so different as to deter people or scare them off. Others will no doubt be better suited than I to find a way to strike this fine balance, but the need for such a balance is, I think, the most important practical message of my study.
## Summary

The aim of this study was to describe, as exhaustively as possible, the statistical characteristics of the *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015. These denominations formed a notable minority in Dutch society, comprising 10% of the population at their peak. Nevertheless, the *Gereformeerde* denominations have a varied and interesting history and are still a distinct part of Dutch society. Therefore, making an overview of their temporal and geographical development represents a useful addition to the existing discourse on their history and future. Following the lead of Knippenberg (1992) and Bernt & Berghuijs (2016), I have tried to give an overview of the development of these denominations and an explanation for their growth, demographic makeup, and geographical distribution. To this end, I developed the following main research question:

What does the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like, and how can it be explained?

That question was in turn divided into three sub-questions:

- 4. What does the temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 5. What does the spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 look like?
- 6. How can the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed de-nominations in the Netherlands between 1892 and 2015 be explained?

All of the statistics and information pertaining to these questions can be found in the preceding parts of this study, this summary will give a short overview of the basic data that were found.

#### The temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015

The findings in part II regarding the temporal and statistical development of the various denominations in the Netherlands can be summarised in the following table:

Denomination	Years in dataset	Members at beginning year	Members at peak	Members in 2015 or final year	Members gone in schisms	% confessing members begin- ning year	% confessing members 2015 or final year
GKN	1892- 2003	328,240	874,591 (1974)	650,892	5,000 (1926); 80,000 (1944)	45	60
CGK	1919- 2015	9,976	76,276 (1985)	71,869		52	62
GKv	1946- 2015	77,350	128,227 (2003)	120,295	8,000 (1967)	52	65
NGK	1970- 2015	23,478	33,366 (2012)	32,926		51	65
GG	1948- 2015	56,781		106,897	8,000 (1953)	48	55
GGN	1954- 2015	8,817		24,182	3,000 (1981)	48	50
ННК	2010- 2015	56,418		58,821		46	46
GB	1973- 2015	598,041	677,175 (1989)	333,961			

The spatial development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015

The information presented in part III of this study can be summarised in the following table:

Denomination	Largest province i.r.t. Netherlands	Largest province within denom- ination	Most popu- lated area of urbanisation	Least popu- lated area of urbanisation	Dissimilarity index
GKN	Friesland	Zuid-Holland	Highly urbanised	G4 <sup>4</sup>	0.43 <sup>5</sup>
CGK	Flevoland	Zuid-Holland	Highly urbanised	G4	0.64
GKv	Groningen	Overijssel	Highly urbanised	G4	0.62

 $<sup>^4</sup>$  G4 stands for Grote 4, the four largest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The dissimilarity index measures the relative number of people who would have to change location to attain an even spread of a minority population over the majority population.

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NGK	Flevoland	Gelderland	Highly/modera-	Not urbani-	0.7
			tely urbanised	sed	
GG	Zeeland	Zuid-Holland	Highly/slightly	G4	0.8
			urbanised		
GGN	Zeeland	Gelderland	Slightly urbanised	G4	0.88
HHK	Gelderland	Gelderland	Slightly urbanised	G4	0.84
GB	Utrecht	Zuid-Holland	Slightly urbanised	G4	0.77

#### *Explanations for the spatio-temporal development of the Reformed denominations in the Netherlands between 1892-2015*

The final part of this study looked into possible explanations for the findings in parts II and III by testing several hypotheses. A number of conclusions were drawn. First, the growth of the *Gereformeerde* denominations is not related to that of the general Dutch population or of other denominations. Instead, they all follow their own, similar pattern: a new denomination is founded, experiences strong growth, stabilises, and then starts to decline, after which it sometimes merges with another denomination. During the period of growth, conflicts leading to a schism are not uncommon. Denominations initially grow by attracting members from other denominations to their new movement, but after the initial enthusiasm dies down, their main source of growth is births. If the birth rate declines, denominations generally also start to shrink. While the Dutch population can still grow due to immigration, churches attract almost no new members. On the contrary, they tend to lose large numbers, either to other – sometimes Reformed – denominations or to secularisation, as not all members who leave join another church.

The geographical distribution of Reformed denominations can be explained partly by historical factors and partly by other factors. On the historical level, we must therefore note that Reformed denominations can be found in places that are not Catholic, or largely non-religious. One of the other factors is urbanisation; churches have a hard time thriving in large cities. In earlier years, the situation was different, but the suburbanisation move that occurred in the Netherlands in the 1960s was even stronger in churches. Another factor influencing the geographical distribution of the denominations is their tendency to cluster. The presence of other denominations seemed to benefit the size and growth of churches. When most of an area is already Reformed, all Reformed churches in that area will be stimulated in their social and cultural persistence. Finally, the location of Reformed schools affiliated with particular denominations also showed a strong relationship with the size and growth of those churches in the neighbourhood of the schools, although the location of such schools is itself, of course, also heavily influenced by the distribution of the denominations.

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Part VI Appendices

# Appendix A Descriptive statistics

### 1. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

	ership	-	nin %	sing	g	essing	ised	tion	es	e size	pali- th
Year	Membe	Growth	Growth	Confes	Baptise	% conf	% bapt	% of Du popula	Local church	Averag church	Munici ties wił GKNs
1893	328,240							6.94%	671	489	255
1894	340,224	11,984	3.52%					7.09%	670	508	257
1895	338,316	-1,908	-0.56%					6.96%	667	507	256
1896	351,693	13,377	3.80%					7.14%	678	519	257
1897	353,011	1,318	0.37%					7.05%	676	522	257
1898	358,191	5,180	1.45%					7.95%	678	528	260
1899	366,200	8,009	2.19%					8.06%	667	549	258
1900	362,562	-3,638	-1.00%					7.13%	675	537	260
1901	371,829	9,267	2.49%					7.21%	679	548	261
1902	377,253	5,424	1.44%					7.20%	679	556	262
1903	380,120	2,867	0.75%					7.14%	678	561	261
1904	382,978	2,858	0.75%					7.08%	684	560	262
1905	385,428	2,450	0.64%					7.03%	687	561	265
1906	393,870	8,442	2.14%					7.08%	687	573	265
1907	399,874	6,004	1.50%					7.08%	689	580	265
1908	390,810	-9,064	-2.32%					6.83%	689	567	267
1909	415,126	24,316	5.86%					7.16%	692	600	268
1910	418,283	3,157	0.75%					7.17%	689	607	267
1911	425,652	7,369	1.73%					7.19%	687	620	267
1912	434,051	8,399	1.94%					7.24%	691	628	267
1913	441,036	6,985	1.58%					7.24%	694	635	269

1914	451,589	10,553	2.34%					7.30%	692	653	269
1915	459,358	7,769	1.69%	171,784	231,648	37.40%	50.43%	7.28%	694	662	269
1916	465,125	5,767	1.24%	176,801	235,649	38.01%	50.66%	7.24%	699	665	271
1917	472,442	7,317	1.55%	193,515	248,360	40.96%	52.57%	7.21%	700	675	272
1918	478,649	6,207	1.30%	210,110	264,391	43.90%	55.24%	7.15%	699	685	273
1919	486,694	8,045	1.65%	215,113	267,393	44.20%	54.94%	7.21%	701	694	273
1920	492,927	6,233	1.26%	218,843	270,446	44.40%	54.87%	7.25%	707	697	276
1921	498,924	5,997	1.20%	222,965	271,426	44.69%	54.40%	7.30%	709	704	277
1922	504,716	5,792	1.15%	229,297	273,424	45.43%	54.17%	7.27%	709	712	278
1923	513,978	9,262	1.80%	234,737	277,216	45.67%	53.94%	7.29%	708	726	278
1924	521,969	7,991	1.53%	239,381	280,563	45.86%	53.75%	7.27%	712	733	279
1925	532,446	10,477	1.97%	246,617	285,829	46.32%	53.68%	7.31%	713	747	279
1926	541,019	8,573	1.58%	251,688	289,331	46.52%	53.48%	7.33%	716	756	279
1927	540,873	-146	-0.03%	253,022	287,851	46.78%	53.22%	7.22%	718	753	279
1928	544,878	4,005	0.74%	255,974	288,904	46.98%	53.02%	7.18%	717	760	279
1929	553,677	8,799	1.59%	261,289	292,388	47.19%	52.81%	7.20%	721	768	279
1930	561,799	8,122	1.45%	267,127	294,672	47.55%	52.45%	7.21%	724	776	280
1931	568,761	6,962	1.22%	273,834	294,927	48.15%	51.85%	7.19%	727	782	283
1932	575,244	6,483	1.13%	279,035	296,209	48.51%	51.49%	7.16%	731	787	284
1933	583,009	7,765	1.33%	283,361	299,648	48.60%	51.40%	7.15%	732	796	284
1934	593,759	10,750	1.81%	291,870	301,889	49.16%	50.84%	7.19%	740	802	284
1935	602,046	8,287	1.38%	297,780	304,266	49.46%	50.54%	7.20%	743	810	284
1936	610,002	7,956	1.30%	302,791	307,211	49.64%	50.36%	7.22%	743	821	284
1937	616,995	6,993	1.13%	308,203	308,792	49.95%	50.05%	7.23%	750	823	284
1938	626,078	9,083	1.45%	314,859	311,219	50.29%	49.71%	7.26%	752	833	284
1939	632,804	6,726	1.06%	320,241	312,563	50.61%	49.39%	7.26%	755	838	285
1940	640,102	7,298	1.14%	325,001	315,101	50.77%	49.23%	7.26%	757	846	285
1941	649,452	9,350	1.44%	329,974	319,478	50.81%	49.19%	7.29%	759	856	285
1942	660,051	10,599	1.61%	338,793	321,258	51.33%	48.67%	7.34%	767	861	287
1943	671,179	11,128	1.66%	346,792	324,387	51.67%	48.33%	7.41%	770	872	287

1944	684,932	13,753	2.01%	356,155	328,777	52.00%	48.00%	7.53%	773	886	290
1945	658,581	-26,351	-4.00%	341,695	316,886	51.88%	48.12%	7.18%	772	853	
1946	632,625	-25,956	-4.10%	327,431	305,194	51.76%	48.24%	6.84%	770	822	289
1947	633,628	1,003	0.16%	327,407	306,221	51.67%	48.33%	6.67%	774	819	289
1948	648,851	15,223	2.35%	336,723	312,128	51.90%	48.10%	6.70%	781	831	290
1949	658,458	9,607	1.46%	342,836	315,622	52.07%	47.93%	6.68%	783	841	290
1950	667,202	8,744	1.31%	348,588	318,614	52.25%	47.75%	6.68%	785	850	291
1951	679,337	12,135	1.79%	355,790	323,547	52.37%	47.63%	6.68%	784	867	291
1952	684,746	5,409	0.79%	359,551	325,195	52.51%	47.49%	6.65%	784	873	291
1953	689,235	4,489	0.65%	364,103	324,577	52.83%	47.09%	6.62%	787	876	291
1954	695,536	6,301	0.91%	368,527	327,009	52.98%	47.02%	6.61%	789	882	291
1955	703,313	7,777	1.11%	372,550	330,763	52.97%	47.03%	6.60%	788	893	291
1956	712,646	9,333	1.31%	377,530	335,116	52.98%	47.02%	6.60%	791	901	291
1957	722,135	9,489	1.31%	381,850	340,285	52.88%	47.12%	6.61%	797	906	291
1958	729,897	7,762	1.06%	386,115	343,782	52.90%	47.10%	6.60%	801	911	291
1959	740,553	10,656	1.44%	392,666	347,887	53.02%	46.98%	6.59%	802	923	292
1960	751,399	10,846	1.44%	398,357	353,042	53.02%	46.98%	6.60%	805	933	292
1961	761,909	10,510	1.38%	404,356	357,553	53.07%	46.93%	6.62%	808	943	292
1962	773,917	12,008	1.55%	410,585	363,332	53.05%	46.95%	6.63%	811	954	293
1963	784,044	10,127	1.29%	416,182	367,862	53.08%	46.92%	6.62%	812	966	293
1964	799,226	15,182	1.90%	423,938	375,288	53.04%	46.96%	6.64%	816	979	294
1965	811,080	11,854	1.46%	430,792	380,288	53.11%	46.89%	6.65%	817	993	295
1966	823,367	12,287	1.49%	437,201	386,166	53.10%	46.90%	6.66%	818	1,007	296
1967	833,402	10,035	1.20%	443,346	390,056	53.20%	46.80%	6.66%	822	1,014	297
1968	844,289	10,887	1.29%	450,356	393,933	53.34%	46.66%	6.68%	821	1,028	298
1969	852,059	7,770	0.91%	455,822	396,237	53.50%	46.50%	6.67%	822	1,037	301
1970	859,993	7,934	0.92%	460,268	399,725	53.52%	46.48%	6.65%	819	1,050	301
1971	865,068	5,075	0.59%	463,302	401,766	53.56%	46.44%	6.60%	814	1,063	301
1972	869,967	4,899	0.56%	465,889	404,078	53.55%	46.45%	6.57%	813	1,070	302
1973	874,497	4,530	0.52%	469,004	405,493	53.63%	46.37%	6.54%	810	1,080	302

1974	874,591	94	0.01%	471,175	403,416	53.87%	46.13%	6.49%	809	1,081	303
1975	873,630	-961	-0.11%	473,470	400,160	54.20%	45.80%	6.43%	804	1,087	303
1976	872,917	-713	-0.08%	474,986	397,931	54.41%	45.59%	6.37%	806	1,083	306
1977	870,524	-2,393	-0.27%	477,505	393,019	54.85%	45.15%	6.31%	806	1,080	307
1978	870,537	13	0.00%	479,727	390,810	55.11%	44.89%	6.28%	808	1,077	310
1979	868,846	-1,691	-0.19%	481,878	386,968	55.46%	44.54%	6.23%	808	1,075	311
1980	867,103	-1,743	-0.20%	483,472	383,631	55.76%	44.24%	6.18%	810	1,070	314
1981	864,532	-2,571	-0.30%	483,481	381,051	55.92%	44.08%	6.09%	813	1,063	317
1982	859,793	-4,739	-0.55%	481,263	378,530	55.97%	44.03%	6.03%	814	1,056	318
1983	851,420	-8,373	-0.98%	479,854	371,566	56.36%	43.64%	5.95%	817	1,042	321
1984	842,518	-8,902	-1.06%	477,657	364,861	56.69%	43.31%	5.86%	819	1,029	321
1985	834,921	-7,597	-0.91%	474,675	360,246	56.85%	43.15%	5.77%	822	1,016	323
1986	826,423	-8,498	-1.03%	471,441	354,982	57.05%	42.95%	5.69%	821	1,007	323
1987	818,773	-7,650	-0.93%	468,180	350,593	57.18%	42.82%	5.60%	826	991	325
1988	810,589	-8,184	-1.01%	465,532	345,057	57.43%	42.57%	5.51%	831	975	328
1989	800,742	-9,847	-1.23%	461,535	339,207	57.64%	42.36%	5.41%	833	961	330
1990	792,367	-8,375	-1.06%	457,980	334,387	57.80%	42.20%	5.32%	835	949	332
1991	782,562	-9,805	-1.25%	454,173	328,389	58.04%	41.96%	5.21%	840	932	335
1992	772,189	-10,373	-1.34%	449,193	322,996	58.17%	41.83%	5.10%	846	913	336
1993	762,513	-9,676	-1.27%	442,913	319,600	58.09%	41.91%	5.00%	849	898	339
1994	751,708	-10,805	-1.44%	438,822	312,886	58.38%	41.62%	4.90%	848	886	340
1995	738,732	-12,976	-1.76%	433,956	304,238	58.74%	41.18%	4.79%	848	871	340
1996	725,770	-12,962	-1.79%	427,485	297,642	58.90%	41.01%	4.68%	852	852	340
1997	713,240	-12,530	-1.76%	421,105	299,212	59.04%	41.95%	4.58%	846	843	340
1998	700,290	-12,950	-1.85%	414,373	285,916	59.17%	40.83%	4.47%	845	829	341
1999	687,283	-13,007	-1.89%	407,958	279,323	59.36%	40.64%	4.36%	843	815	341
2000	673,926	-13,357	-1.98%	399,997	273,932	59.35%	40.65%	4.25%	840	802	341
2001	668,103	-5,823	-0.87%	392,554	275,182	58.76%	41.19%	4.18%	839	796	341
2002	658,678	-9,425	-1.43%	390,116	268,562	59.23%	40.77%	4.09%	839	785	341
2003	650,892	-7,786	-1.20%	385,821	264,960	59.28%	40.71%	4.02%	839	776	339

### 2. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing members	Baptised members	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch population	Local churches	Average church size	Municipali- ties with CGKs
1919	9,976							0.15%	47	212	45
1920	14,798	4,822	32.59%					0.22%	63	235	59
1921	17,079	2,281	13.36%					0.25%	72	237	68
1922	18,951	1,872	9.88%					0.27%	80	237	75
1923	22,350	3,399	15.21%					0.32%	85	263	80
1924	24,964	2,614	10.47%					0.35%	93	268	88
1925	26,336	1,372	5.21%					0.36%	94	280	87
1926	28,237	1,901	6.73%					0.38%	96	294	89
1927	28,811	574	1.99%					0.38%	98	294	89
1928	30,320	1,509	4.98%					0.40%	103	294	91
1929	33,013	2,693	8.16%					0.43%	110	300	95
1930	34,243	1,230	3.59%					0.44%	112	306	98
1931	34,677	434	1.25%					0.44%	114	304	98
1932	36,101	1,424	3.94%					0.45%	117	309	99
1933	38,157	2,056	5.39%					0.47%	123	310	105
1934	37,833	-324	-0.86%					0.46%	125	303	105
1935	39,211	1,378	3.51%					0.47%	126	311	105
1936	39,767	556	1.40%					0.47%	127	313	105
1937	42,103	2,336	5.55%					0.49%	130	324	108

1938	43,146	1,043	2.42%					0.50%	133	324	111
1939	43,512	366	0.84%					0.50%	133	327	110
1940	43,753	241	0.55%					0.50%	134	327	112
1941	44,185	432	0.98%					0.50%	133	332	112
1942	44,699	514	1.15%					0.50%	134	334	112
1943	45,174	475	1.05%					0.50%	134	337	112
1944	42,612	-2,562	-6.01%					0.52%	137	311	112
1945	45,804	3,192	6.97%					0.52%	137	334	114
1946	49,888	4,084	8.19%					0.54%	140	356	116
1947	51,302	1,414	2.76%					0.54%	143	359	116
1948	52,363	1,061	2.03%	23,782	26,621	45.42%	50.84%	0.54%	147	356	119
1949	53,909	1,546	2.87%	25,110	27,993	46.58%	51.93%	0.55%	149	362	119
1950	54,624	715	1.31%	25,929	28,568	47.47%	52.30%	0.55%	148	369	118
1951	55,419	795	1.43%	26,756	28,641	48.28%	51.68%	0.55%	149	372	118
1952	56,240	821	1.46%	27,076	29,164	48.14%	51.86%	0.55%	151	372	119
1953	56,367	127	0.23%	27,406	28,961	48.62%	51.38%	0.54%	151	373	118
1954	57,052	685	1.20%	27,742	29,310	48.63%	51.37%	0.54%	153	373	119
1955	57,242	190	0.33%	28,251	28,991	49.35%	50.65%	0.54%	158	362	120
1956	58,236	994	1.71%	28,783	29,453	49.42%	50.58%	0.54%	159	366	121
1957	60,327	2,091	3.47%	29,669	30,658	49.18%	50.82%	0.55%	161	375	121
1958	61,391	1,064	1.73%	30,438	30,953	49.58%	50.42%	0.55%	164	374	120
1959	62,234	843	1.35%	30,899	31,335	49.65%	50.35%	0.55%	166	375	122
1960	63,244	1,010	1.60%	31,485	31,759	49.78%	50.22%	0.56%	167	379	122
1961	63,445	201	0.32%	31,658	31,787	49.90%	50.10%	0.55%	167	380	123
1962	64,590	1,145	1.77%	32,353	32,237	50.09%	49.91%	0.55%	171	378	126
1963	65,060	470	0.72%	32,702	32,358	50.26%	49.74%	0.55%	171	380	126

1964	65,891	831	1.26%	33,034	32,857	50.13%	49.87%	0.55%	172	383	126
1965	66,085	194	0.29%	33,157	32,928	50.17%	49.83%	0.54%	173	382	127
1966	66,866	781	1.17%	33,746	33,120	50.47%	49.53%	0.54%	173	387	127
1967	67,494	628	0.93%	34,125	33,369	50.56%	49.44%	0.54%	174	388	128
1968	<b>68,340</b>	846	1.24%	34,953	33,387	51.15%	48.85%	0.54%	175	391	129
1969	69,000	660	0.96%	35,504	33,496	51.46%	48.54%	0.54%	174	397	128
1970	69,632	632	0.91%	35,919	33,713	51.58%	48.42%	0.54%	174	400	128
1973	70,103	471	0.67%	36,178	33,925	51.61%	48.39%	0.54%	174	403	128
1972	2 70,618	515	0.73%	36,420	34,198	51.57%	48.43%	0.53%	173	408	127
1973	70,807	189	0.27%	36,898	33,909	52.11%	47.89%	0.53%	174	407	128
1974	71,281	474	0.66%	37,332	33,949	52.37%	47.63%	0.53%	173	412	129
1975	71,403	122	0.17%	37,853	33,550	53.01%	46.99%	0.53%	173	413	130
1976	5 71,717	314	0.44%	38,337	33,380	53.46%	46.54%	0.52%	173	415	130
1977	73,563	1,846	2.51%	39,445	34,118	53.62%	46.38%	0.53%	175	420	130
1978	<b>3</b> 73,866	303	0.41%	39,882	33,984	53.99%	46.01%	0.53%	175	422	130
1979	74,279	413	0.56%	40,395	33,884	54.38%	45.62%	0.53%	175	424	130
1980	74,426	147	0.20%	40,814	33,612	54.84%	45.16%	0.53%	175	425	130
1983	75,052	626	0.83%	41,370	33,682	55.12%	44.88%	0.53%	178	422	131
1982	2 75,307	255	0.34%	41,842	33,465	55.56%	44.44%	0.53%	182	414	134
1983	75,768	461	0.61%	42,404	33,364	55.97%	44.03%	0.53%	184	412	136
1984	75,880	112	0.15%	42,691	33,189	56.26%	43.74%	0.53%	184	412	136
198	76,274	394	0.52%	42,993	33,281	56.37%	43.63%	0.53%	185	412	137
1986	<b>5</b> 76,261	-13	-0.02%	43,302	32,959	56.78%	43.22%	0.52%	185	412	137
1987	76,195	-66	-0.09%	43,379	32,816	56.93%	43.07%	0.52%	185	412	137
1988	3 76,112	-83	-0.11%	43,655	32,457	57.36%	42.64%	0.52%	185	411	137
1989	76,093	-19	-0.02%	43,642	32,451	57.35%	42.65%	0.51%	185	411	137

1990	75,844	-249	-0.33%	43,926	31,918	57.92%	42.08%	0.51%	185	410	137
1991	75,762	-82	-0.11%	44,052	31,710	58.15%	41.85%	0.50%	185	410	137
1992	75,601	-161	-0.21%	44,248	31,353	58.53%	41.47%	0.50%	185	409	137
1993	75,473	-128	-0.17%	44,355	31,118	58.77%	41.23%	0.50%	185	408	137
1994	75,254	-219	-0.29%	44,364	30,890	58.95%	41.05%	0.49%	185	407	137
1995	75,229	-25	-0.03%	44,564	30,665	59.24%	40.76%	0.49%	186	404	137
1996	75,273	44	0.06%	44,683	30,590	59.36%	40.64%	0.49%	187	403	138
1997	75,227	-46	-0.06%	44,842	30,385	59.61%	40.39%	0.48%	188	400	139
1998	74,959	-268	-0.36%	44,760	30,199	59.71%	40.29%	0.48%	188	399	139
1999	74,811	-148	-0.20%	44,633	30,178	59.66%	40.34%	0.47%	188	398	139
2000	74,569	-242	-0.32%	44,787	29,782	60.06%	39.94%	0.47%	188	397	139
2001	74,119	-450	-0.61%	44,317	29,802	59.79%	40.21%	0.46%	187	396	140
2002	73,830	-289	-0.39%	44,250	29,580	59.93%	40.07%	0.46%	187	395	140
2003	73,954	124	0.17%	44,541	29,413	60.23%	39.77%	0.46%	185	400	139
2004	72,892	-1,062	-1.46%	44,104	29,119	60.51%	39.95%	0.45%	181	403	137
2005	72,957	65	0.09%	44,052	29,129	60.38%	39.93%	0.45%	180	405	137
2006	73,991	1,034	1.40%	44,869	29,343	60.64%	39.66%	0.45%	181	409	137
2007	73,973	-18	-0.02%	44,791	29,263	60.55%	39.56%	0.45%	181	409	137
2008	73,821	-152	-0.21%	44,959	29,112	60.90%	39.44%	0.45%	180	410	137
2009	73,401	-420	-0.57%	45,129	28,976	61.48%	39.48%	0.45%	180	408	137
2010	73,839	438	0.59%	44,928	28,829	60.85%	39.04%	0.45%	178	415	137
2011	73,756	-83	-0.11%	45,269	28,694	61.38%	38.90%	0.44%	179	412	137
2012	73,338	-418	-0.57%	45,020	28,559	61.39%	38.94%	0.44%	178	412	136
2013	72,200	-1,138	-1.58%	44,516	28,201	61.66%	39.06%	0.43%	176	410	135
2014	71,987	-213	-0.30%	44,486	28,013	61.80%	38.91%	0.43%	177	407	136
2015	71,869	-118	-0.16%	44,360	27,703	61.72%	38.55%	0.43%	177	406	136

## 3. Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing	Baptised	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch population	Local churches	Average church size	Municipali- ties with GKvs
1946	77,350			40,728	36,622	52.65%	47.35%	0.83%	215	360	125
1947	87,198	9,848	11.29%	45,439	41,759	52.11%	47.89%	0.91%	267	327	154
1948	90,423	3,225	3.57%	47,504	42,919	52.54%	47.46%	0.93%	281	322	164
1949	92,157	1,734	1.88%	48,145	44,012	52.24%	47.76%	0.93%	288	320	167
1950	93,063	906	0.97%	48,764	44,299	52.40%	47.60%	0.93%	291	320	167
1951	91,715	-1,348	-1.47%	48,122	43,593	52.47%	47.53%	0.90%	297	309	170
1952	90,653	-1,062	-1.17%	47,949	42,604	52.89%	47.00%	0.88%	296	306	169
1953	91,239	586	0.64%	48,264	42,975	52.90%	47.10%	0.87%	296	308	170
1954	92,019	780	0.85%	48,644	43,375	52.86%	47.14%	0.87%	296	311	170
1955	92,331	312	0.34%	48,651	43,680	52.69%	47.31%	0.86%	298	310	170
1956	93,189	858	0.92%	48,954	44,235	52.53%	47.47%	0.86%	301	310	170
1957	94,270	1,081	1.15%	49,537	44,733	52.55%	47.45%	0.86%	302	312	171
1958	95,666	1,396	1.46%	50,164	45,502	52.44%	47.56%	0.86%	302	317	171
1959	96,853	1,187	1.23%	50,774	46,079	52.42%	47.58%	0.86%	304	319	173
1960	98,215	1,362	1.39%	51,554	46,661	52.49%	47.51%	0.86%	308	319	174
1961	99,601	1,386	1.39%	52,144	47,457	52.35%	47.65%	0.86%	308	323	174
1962	100,930	1,329	1.32%	52,723	48,207	52.24%	47.76%	0.86%	311	325	175
1963	102,237	1,307	1.28%	53,344	48,893	52.18%	47.82%	0.86%	308	332	175
1964	104,048	1,811	1.74%	54,322	49,726	52.21%	47.79%	0.86%	306	340	175

1965	105,297	1,249	1.19%	55,005	50,292	52.24%	47.76%	0.86%	303	348	174
1966	106,648	1,351	1.27%	55,598	51,050	52.13%	47.87%	0.86%	303	352	174
1967	107,599	951	0.88%	56,286	51,313	52.31%	47.69%	0.86%	302	356	174
1968	107,766	167	0.15%	56,707	51,159	52.62%	47.47%	0.85%	306	352	172
1969	94,992	-12,774	-13.45%	49,910	45,082	52.54%	47.46%	0.74%	284	334	163
1970	86,494	-8,498	-9.82%	45,776	40,718	52.92%	47.08%	0.67%	274	316	161
1971	84,759	-1,735	-2.05%	44,973	39,786	53.06%	46.94%	0.65%	272	312	159
1972	85,938	1,179	1.37%	46,033	39,905	53.57%	46.43%	0.65%	271	317	158
1973	87,149	1,211	1.39%	47,023	40,126	53.96%	46.04%	0.65%	266	328	158
1974	88,763	1,614	1.82%	48,155	40,608	54.25%	45.75%	0.66%	263	338	157
1975	90,547	1,784	1.97%	49,508	41,039	54.68%	45.32%	0.67%	263	344	157
1976	91,989	1,442	1.57%	50,641	41,348	55.05%	44.95%	0.67%	261	352	156
1977	93,766	1,777	1.90%	51,957	41,809	55.41%	44.59%	0.68%	265	354	158
1978	95,370	1,604	1.68%	53,106	42,264	55.68%	44.32%	0.69%	264	361	157
1979	96,924	1,554	1.60%	54,259	42,665	55.98%	44.02%	0.69%	262	370	157
1980	98,547	1,623	1.65%	55,016	43,531	55.83%	44.17%	0.70%	261	378	157
1981	99,766	1,219	1.22%	56,406	43,360	56.54%	43.46%	0.70%	260	384	157
1982	101,683	1,917	1.89%	57,599	44,084	56.65%	43.35%	0.71%	263	387	158
1983	103,171	1,488	1.44%	58,587	44,584	56.79%	43.21%	0.72%	263	392	158
1984	104,928	1,757	1.67%	59,780	45,148	56.97%	43.03%	0.73%	263	399	158
1985	106,610	1,682	1.58%	60,944	45,666	57.17%	42.83%	0.74%	263	405	158
1986	108,099	1,489	1.38%	62,065	46,034	57.41%	42.59%	0.74%	262	413	158
1987	109,408	1,309	1.20%	62,983	46,425	57.57%	42.43%	0.75%	262	418	159
1988	111,092	1,684	1.52%	64,110	46,982	57.71%	42.29%	0.75%	261	426	160
1989	112,587	1,495	1.33%	65,217	47,370	57.93%	42.07%	0.76%	262	430	161
1990	114,063	1,476	1.29%	66,454	47,609	58.26%	41.74%	0.77%	264	432	161

1991	115,560	1,497	1.30%	67,529	48,031	58.44%	41.56%	0.77%	263	439	159
1992	116,689	1,129	0.97%	68,563	48,126	58.76%	41.24%	0.77%	264	442	159
1993	118,324	1,635	1.38%	69,839	48,485	59.02%	40.98%	0.78%	264	448	159
1994	119,519	1,195	1.00%	70,912	48,607	59.33%	40.67%	0.78%	265	451	159
1995	120,613	1,094	0.91%	71,934	48,679	59.64%	40.36%	0.78%	264	457	159
1996	121,574	961	0.79%	72,806	48,768	59.89%	40.11%	0.78%	262	464	158
1997	122,669	1,095	0.89%	73,848	48,821	60.20%	39.80%	0.79%	262	468	157
1998	123,886	1,217	0.98%	75,035	48,851	60.57%	39.43%	0.79%	265	467	159
1999	124,180	294	0.24%	74,871	48,060	60.29%	38.70%	0.79%	264	470	159
2000	124,467	287	0.23%	76,353	49,114	61.34%	39.46%	0.78%	270	461	159
2001	125,185	718	0.57%	77,248	47,937	61.71%	38.29%	0.78%	269	465	158
2002	126,383	1,198	0.95%	78,394	47,989	62.03%	37.97%	0.78%	270	468	158
2003	127,017	634	0.50%	78,819	47,463	62.05%	37.37%	0.78%	272	467	158
2004	126,739	-278	-0.22%	78,778	47,484	62.16%	37.47%	0.78%	271	468	158
2005	125,837	-902	-0.72%	79,255	46,782	62.98%	37.18%	0.77%	273	461	158
2006	125,732	-105	-0.08%	79,315	46,417	63.08%	36.92%	0.77%	275	457	158
2007	125,735	3	0.00%	79,734	46,001	63.41%	36.59%	0.77%	278	452	158
2008	125,025	-710	-0.57%	79,825	45,200	63.85%	36.15%	0.76%	277	451	158
2009	125,008	-17	-0.01%	79,828	45,180	63.86%	36.14%	0.76%	277	451	158
2010	124,439	-569	-0.46%	80,065	44,374	64.34%	35.66%	0.75%	277	449	158
2011	123,502	-937	-0.76%	79,826	43,676	64.64%	35.36%	0.74%	276	447	158
2012	122,931	-571	-0.46%	79,627	43,304	64.77%	35.23%	0.73%	276	445	159
2013	121,749	-1,182	-0.97%	78,816	42,957	64.74%	35.28%	0.73%	270	451	157
2014	121,291	-458	-0.38%	40,728	36,622	64.98%	34.88%	0.72%	268	453	157
2015	120,295	-996	-0.83%	45,439	41,759	65.22%	34.81%	0.71%	267	451	157

#### 4. Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing members	Baptised mem- bers	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch po- pulation	Local churches	Average church size	Municipalities with NGKs
1970	23,478			11,825	10,775	50.37%	45.89%	0.18%	78	301	66
1971	27,654	4,176	15.10%	14,681	12,607	53.09%	45.59%	0.21%	94	294	82
1972	26,935	-719	-2.67%	14,189	12,587	52.68%	46.73%	0.21%	87	310	77
1973	27,374	438	1.60%	14,685	12,537	53.65%	45.80%	0.21%	94	291	76
1974	28,817	1,443	5.01%	15,716	12,958	54.54%	44.97%	0.21%	96	300	84
1975	28,714	-103	-0.36%	16,050	12,477	55.90%	43.45%	0.21%	94	305	84
1976	28,495	-219	-0.77%	16,386	12,200	55.92%	42.59%	0.21%	94	303	81
1977	29,065	570	1.96%	16,679	12,192	56.38%	41.97%	0.21%	93	313	85
1978	29,281	216	0.74%	16,913	11,991	56.96%	41.64%	0.21%	94	312	86
1979	29,309	28	0.10%	17,009	11,897	57.71%	40.91%	0.21%	94	312	86
1980	29,330	21	0.07%	17,225	11,767	57.99%	40.56%	0.21%	93	315	85
1981	29,488	158	0.54%	17,336	11,654	58.41%	39.90%	0.21%	93	317	85
1982	29,470	-18	-0.06%	17,355	11,529	58.83%	39.55%	0.21%	93	317	85
1983	29,382	-88	-0.30%	17,459	11,394	59.07%	39.24%	0.21%	94	313	86
1984	29,364	-18	-0.06%	17,632	11,314	59.46%	38.80%	0.20%	95	309	86
1985	29,475	111	0.38%	17,855	11,175	59.82%	38.39%	0.20%	95	310	86
1986	29,517	42	0.14%	18,043	11,134	60.49%	37.86%	0.20%	95	311	86
1987	29,567	50	0.17%	18,256	11,059	61.02%	37.66%	0.20%	95	311	86
1988	29,729	162	0.54%	18,292	11,067	61.41%	37.20%	0.20%	96	310	87

1989	29,783	54	0.18%	18,330	10,843	61.42%	37.16%	0.20%	96	310	87
1990	29,619	-164	-0.55%	18,567	10,721	61.89%	36.61%	0.20%	95	312	86
1991	29,583	-36	-0.12%	18,830	10,819	62.76%	36.24%	0.20%	95	311	86
1992	29,649	66	0.22%	18,844	10,710	63.51%	36.49%	0.20%	95	312	86
1993	29,755	106	0.36%	18,742	10,621	63.33%	35.99%	0.20%	96	310	87
1994	29,566	-189	-0.64%	19,096	10,496	63.39%	35.92%	0.19%	94	315	85
1995	29,752	186	0.63%	19,099	10,634	64.18%	35.28%	0.19%	94	317	84
1996	29,733	-19	-0.06%	19,114	10,629	64.24%	35.76%	0.19%	94	316	84
1997	29,743	10	0.03%	19,442	10,632	64.26%	35.74%	0.19%	95	313	85
1998	30,094	351	1.17%	19,283	10,879	64.60%	35.33%	0.19%	94	320	83
1999	30,162	68	0.23%	19,397	10,962	63.93%	36.07%	0.19%	94	321	83
2000	30,393	231	0.76%	19,645	11,077	63.82%	36.07%	0.19%	93	327	82
2001	30,758	365	1.19%	19,960	11,293	63.87%	36.01%	0.19%	93	331	82
2002	31,253	495	1.58%	19,916	11,346	63.87%	36.13%	0.19%	94	332	82
2003	31,280	27	0.09%	20,353	11,513	63.67%	36.27%	0.19%	93	336	82
2004	31,963	683	2.14%	20,322	11,453	63.68%	36.02%	0.20%	93	344	82
2005	31,771	-192	-0.60%	20,731	11,393	63.96%	36.05%	0.19%	93	342	82
2006	32,261	490	1.52%	20,720	11,752	64.26%	35.32%	0.20%	93	347	83
2007	32,419	158	0.49%	20,907	11,778	63.91%	36.25%	0.20%	92	352	82
2008	32,685	266	0.81%	20,925	11,886	63.97%	36.03%	0.20%	92	355	82
2009	32,813	128	0.39%	20,829	14,101	63.77%	36.22%	0.20%	91	361	80
2010	32,777	-36	-0.11%	21,029	12,108	63.55%	36.92%	0.20%	91	360	80
2011	33,239	462	1.39%	21,033	12,332	63.27%	36.43%	0.20%	92	361	80
2012	33,366	127	0.38%	20,889	12,166	63.04%	36.96%	0.20%	91	367	79
2013	33,143	-223	-0.67%	20,823	12,042	63.03%	36.71%	0.20%	89	372	78

2014	32,956	-187	-0.57%	20,808	12,017	63.18%	36.54%	0.20%	88	375	77
2015	32,926	-30	-0.09%	20,808	12,017	63.20%	36.50%	0.20%	87	378	76

#### 5. Gereformeerde Gemeenten

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing	Baptised	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch population	Local churches	Average church size	Municipalities with GGs
1948	56,781			27,134	29,647	47.79%	52.21%	0.59%	124	458	83
1949	61,127	4,346	7.11%	29,655	31,472	48.51%	51.49%	0.62%	132	463	85
1950	61,900	773	1.25%	30,092	31,808	48.61%	51.39%	0.62%	137	452	90
1951	64,551	2,651	4.11%	31,674	32,877	49.07%	50.93%	0.63%	141	458	93
1952	65,383	832	1.27%	32,257	33,126	49.34%	50.66%	0.64%	144	454	95
1953	66,689	1,306	1.96%	33,072	33,617	49.59%	50.41%	0.64%	145	460	97
1954	58,982	-7,707	-13.07%	29,424	29,558	49.89%	50.11%	0.56%	131	450	88
1955	59,318	336	0.57%	29,691	29,627	50.05%	49.95%	0.56%	132	449	89
1956	58,888	-430	-0.73%	29,650	29,238	50.35%	49.65%	0.55%	130	453	88
1957	59,801	913	1.53%	30,004	29,797	50.17%	49.83%	0.55%	133	450	89
1958	60,621	820	1.35%	30,411	30,210	50.17%	49.83%	0.55%	135	449	90
1959	61,301	680	1.11%	30,824	30,477	50.28%	49.72%	0.55%	138	444	92
1960	62,159	858	1.38%	31,183	30,976	50.17%	49.83%	0.55%	139	447	93
1961	63,475	1,316	2.07%	31,828	31,647	50.14%	49.86%	0.55%	144	441	94
1962	64,418	943	1.46%	32,328	32,090	50.18%	49.82%	0.55%	145	444	95
1963	65,869	1,451	2.20%	33,228	32,641	50.45%	49.55%	0.56%	149	442	98
1964	66,839	970	1.45%	33,565	33,274	50.22%	49.78%	0.56%	148	452	97
1965	67,936	1,097	1.61%	34,110	33,826	50.21%	49.79%	0.56%	149	456	98
1966	69,496	1,560	2.24%	35,006	34,490	50.37%	49.63%	0.56%	150	463	99
1967	70,726	1,230	1.74%	35,498	35,228	50.19%	49.81%	0.56%	150	472	99

1968	72,055	1,329	1.84%	36,203	35,852	50.24%	49.76%	0.57%	151	477	100
1969	73,410	1,355	1.85%	37,077	36,333	50.51%	49.49%	0.57%	151	486	100
1970	75,552	2,142	2.84%	38,222	37,330	50.59%	49.41%	0.58%	153	494	102
1971	76,720	1,168	1.52%	38,816	37,904	50.59%	49.41%	0.59%	154	498	103
1972	77,790	1,070	1.38%	39,524	38,266	50.81%	49.19%	0.59%	154	505	102
1973	78,822	1,032	1.31%	40,011	38,811	50.76%	49.24%	0.59%	156	505	103
1974	79,026	204	0.26%	40,212	38,814	50.88%	49.12%	0.59%	156	507	103
1975	79,902	876	1.10%	40,741	39,161	50.99%	49.01%	0.59%	156	512	103
1976	80,241	339	0.42%	41,109	39,132	51.23%	48.77%	0.59%	155	518	103
1977	80,783	542	0.67%	41,558	39,225	51.44%	48.56%	0.59%	156	518	103
1978	81,424	641	0.79%	42,175	39,249	51.80%	48.20%	0.59%	156	522	103
1979	82,320	896	1.09%	42,767	39,553	51.95%	48.05%	0.59%	156	528	103
1980	82,747	427	0.52%	43,179	39,568	52.18%	47.82%	0.59%	158	524	104
1981	83,789	1,042	1.24%	43,826	39 <i>,</i> 963	52.31%	47.69%	0.59%	159	527	105
1982	84,722	933	1.10%	44,424	40,298	52.44%	47.56%	0.59%	159	533	105
1983	85,295	573	0.67%	44,870	40,425	52.61%	47.39%	0.60%	160	533	106
1984	86,121	826	0.96%	45,371	40,750	52.68%	47.32%	0.60%	161	535	107
1985	86,819	698	0.80%	45,818	41,001	52.77%	47.23%	0.60%	161	539	107
1986	87,792	973	1.11%	46,246	41,546	52.68%	47.32%	0.60%	161	545	107
1987	88,497	705	0.80%	46,565	41,932	52.62%	47.38%	0.61%	162	546	108
1988	88,928	431	0.48%	46,849	42,079	52.68%	47.32%	0.60%	162	549	108
1989	89,515	587	0.66%	47,225	42,290	52.76%	47.24%	0.60%	162	553	108
1990	90,648	1,133	1.25%	47,888	42,760	52.83%	47.17%	0.61%	162	560	110
1991	90,926	278	0.31%	48,058	42,868	52.85%	47.15%	0.61%	161	565	109
1992	91,829	903	0.98%	48,556	43,273	52.88%	47.12%	0.61%	161	570	108
1993	92,717	888	0.96%	49,067	43,650	52.92%	47.08%	0.61%	161	576	108

1994	93,408	691	0.74%	49,661	43,747	53.17%	46.83%	0.61%	161	580	109
1995	94,298	890	0.94%	50,130	44,168	53.16%	46.84%	0.61%	159	593	109
1996	95,061	763	0.80%	50,654	44,407	53.29%	46.71%	0.61%	159	598	109
1997	95,929	868	0.90%	51,218	44,711	53.39%	46.61%	0.62%	159	603	109
1998	96,564	635	0.66%	51,643	44,921	53.48%	46.52%	0.62%	159	607	109
1999	97,556	992	1.02%	52,000	45,556	53.30%	46.70%	0.62%	158	617	109
2000	98,451	895	0.91%	52,485	45,971	53.31%	46.69%	0.62%	159	619	108
2001	99,151	700	0.71%	52,892	46,259	53.34%	46.66%	0.62%	157	632	107
2002	99,808	657	0.66%	53,210	46,598	53.31%	46.69%	0.62%	157	636	107
2003	100,570	762	0.76%	53,710	46,860	53.41%	46.59%	0.62%	156	645	106
2004	101,522	952	0.94%	54,209	47,313	53.40%	46.60%	0.62%	158	643	108
2005	102,377	855	0.84%	54,774	47,603	53.50%	46.50%	0.63%	158	648	110
2006	102,471	94	0.09%	54,714	47,757	53.39%	46.61%	0.63%	158	649	110
2007	103,250	779	0.75%	55,479	47,771	53.73%	46.27%	0.63%	160	645	110
2008	103,539	289	0.28%	55,819	47,720	53.91%	46.09%	0.63%	159	651	109
2009	103,742	203	0.20%	56,216	47,526	54.19%	45.81%	0.63%	159	652	105
2010	104,418	676	0.65%	56,785	47,633	54.38%	45.62%	0.63%	159	657	108
2011	105,331	913	0.87%	57,690	47,641	54.77%	45.23%	0.63%	159	662	108
2012	105,446	115	0.11%	57,761	47,381	54.78%	44.93%	0.63%	158	667	108
2013	105,676	230	0.22%	58,026	47,591	54.91%	45.03%	0.63%	156	677	107
2014	106,100	424	0.40%	58,605	47,978	55.24%	45.22%	0.64%	153	693	105
2015	106,897	797	0.75%	58,914	47,983	55.11%	44.89%	0.64%	154	694	107

#### 6. Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing	Baptised	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch population	Local churches	Average church size	Municipalities with GGNs
1954	8,817			4,276	4,541	48.50%	51.50%	0.08%	33	267	30
1955	9,579	762	7.95%	4,665	4,914	48.70%	51.30%	0.09%	38	252	33
1956	11,657	2,078	17.83%	5,730	5,927	49.16%	50.84%	0.11%	41	284	35
1957	12,282	625	5.09%	5,958	6,324	48.51%	51.49%	0.11%	45	273	38
1958	12,483	201	1.61%	6,073	6,410	48.65%	51.35%	0.11%	46	271	39
1959	12,760	277	2.17%	6,214	6,546	48.70%	51.30%	0.11%	47	271	40
1960	12,854	94	0.73%	6,247	6,607	48.60%	51.40%	0.11%	47	273	40
1961	13,052	198	1.52%	6,286	6,766	48.16%	51.84%	0.11%	48	272	40
1962	13,599	547	4.02%	6,598	7,001	48.52%	51.48%	0.12%	48	283	39
1963	13,735	136	0.99%	6,657	7,078	48.47%	51.53%	0.12%	48	286	39
1964	13,821	86	0.62%	6,633	7,188	47.99%	52.01%	0.11%	48	288	39
1965	13,857	36	0.26%	6,613	7,244	47.72%	52.28%	0.11%	49	283	40
1966	14,326	469	3.27%	6,850	7,476	47.82%	52.18%	0.12%	49	292	40
1967	14,459	133	0.92%	6,914	7,545	47.82%	52.18%	0.12%	50	289	41
1968	14,814	355	2.40%	7,054	7,760	47.62%	52.38%	0.12%	49	302	40
1969	15,452	638	4.13%	7,311	8,141	47.31%	52.69%	0.12%	51	303	41
1970	15,923	471	2.96%	7,590	8,333	47.67%	52.33%	0.12%	51	312	41
1971	16,052	129	0.80%	7,595	8,457	47.31%	52.69%	0.12%	52	309	42
1972	16,206	154	0.95%	7,710	8,496	47.57%	52.43%	0.12%	51	318	42
1973	16,484	278	1.69%	7,867	8,617	47.73%	52.27%	0.12%	52	317	43

1974	16,654	170	1.02%	7,917	8,737	47.54%	52.46%	0.12%	53	314	44
1975	17,060	406	2.38%	8,149	8,911	47.77%	52.23%	0.13%	54	316	44
1976	17,145	85	0.50%	8,215	9,066	47.91%	52.88%	0.13%	54	318	44
1977	17,523	378	2.16%	8,368	9,155	47.75%	52.25%	0.13%	54	325	44
1978	17,921	398	2.22%	8,630	9,291	48.16%	51.84%	0.13%	55	326	45
1979	18,342	421	2.30%	8,760	9,582	47.76%	52.24%	0.13%	55	333	45
1980	19,101	759	3.97%	9,043	10,058	47.34%	52.66%	0.14%	57	335	47
1981	16,194	-2,907	-17.95%	7,564	8,630	46.71%	53.29%	0.11%	54	300	46
1982	16,255	61	0.38%	7,633	8,622	46.96%	53.04%	0.11%	53	307	46
1983	16,149	-106	-0.66%	7,713	8,436	47.76%	52.24%	0.11%	53	305	46
1984	16,309	160	0.98%	7,773	8,536	47.66%	52.34%	0.11%	54	302	47
1985	16,472	163	0.99%	7,816	8,656	47.45%	52.55%	0.11%	54	305	47
1986	16,745	273	1.63%	7,956	8,789	47.51%	52.49%	0.12%	53	316	47
1987	17,205	460	2.67%	8,174	9,031	47.51%	52.49%	0.12%	54	319	48
1988	17,353	148	0.85%	8,278	9,075	47.70%	52.30%	0.12%	54	321	48
1989	17,882	529	2.96%	8,498	9,384	47.52%	52.48%	0.12%	54	331	48
1990	18,277	395	2.16%	8,651	9,626	47.33%	52.67%	0.12%	54	338	48
1991	18,652	375	2.01%	8,787	9 <i>,</i> 865	47.11%	52.89%	0.12%	54	345	48
1992	19,027	375	1.97%	8,935	10,092	46.96%	53.04%	0.13%	54	352	48
1993	19,251	224	1.16%	9,088	10,163	47.21%	52.79%	0.13%	54	357	48
1994	19,444	193	0.99%	9,173	10,271	47.18%	52.82%	0.13%	53	367	48
1995	19,828	384	1.94%	9,323	10,505	47.02%	52.98%	0.13%	54	367	48
1996	20,059	231	1.15%	9,439	10,620	47.06%	52.94%	0.13%	54	371	48
1997	19,877	-182	-0.92%	9,584	10,293	48.22%	51.78%	0.13%	54	368	48
1998	20,382	505	2.48%	9,616	10,766	47.18%	52.82%	0.13%	54	377	48
1999	20,473	91	0.44%	9,643	10,830	47.10%	52.90%	0.13%	53	386	47

2000	20,644	171	0.83%	9,758	10,886	47.27%	52.73%	0.13%	53	390	47
2001	20,854	210	1.01%	9,839	11,015	47.18%	52.82%	0.13%	53	393	47
2002	21,003	149	0.71%	9,922	11,081	47.24%	52.76%	0.13%	53	396	47
2003	21,505	502	2.33%	10,224	11,281	47.54%	52.46%	0.13%	52	414	46
2004	21,648	143	0.66%	10,326	11,322	47.70%	52.30%	0.13%	52	416	46
2005	21,646	-2	-0.01%	10,424	11,222	48.16%	51.84%	0.13%	48	451	43
2006	21,708	62	0.29%	10,490	11,218	48.32%	51.68%	0.13%	48	452	43
2007	21,844	136	0.62%	10,589	11,255	48.48%	51.52%	0.13%	47	465	42
2008	21,968	124	0.56%	10,658	11,310	48.52%	51.48%	0.13%	47	467	42
2009	22,572	604	2.68%	10,623	11,247	47.06%	49.83%	0.13%	48	470	42
2010	23,182	610	2.63%	11,306	11,840	48.77%	51.07%	0.14%	49	473	42
2011	23,823	641	2.69%	11,643	12,143	48.87%	50.97%	0.14%	49	486	42
2012	24,029	206	0.86%	11,788	12,202	49.06%	50.78%	0.14%	49	490	42
2013	24,060	31	0.13%	11,837	12,164	49.20%	50.56%	0.14%	49	491	42
2014	24,037	-23	-0.10%	11,905	12,132	49.53%	50.47%	0.14%	49	491	42
2015	24,182	145	0.60%	12,020	12,162	49.71%	50.29%	0.15%	49	494	42

#### 7. Hersteld Hervormde Kerken

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	Confessing	Baptised	% confessing	% baptised	% of Dutch population	Local churches	Average church size	Municipalities with HHKs
2010	56,418			24,253	30,450	42.99%	53.97%	0.34%	115	491	80
2011	56,713	295	0.52%	24,589	30,492	43.36%	53.77%	0.34%	116	489	80
2012	57,694	981	1.70%	25,243	30,860	43.75%	53.49%	0.34%	116	497	80
2013	58 <i>,</i> 366	672	1.15%	25,822	31,003	44.24%	53.12%	0.35%	116	503	80
2014	58 <i>,</i> 805	439	0.75%	26,292	31,007	44.71%	52.73%	0.35%	116	507	80
2015	58,821	16	0.03%	26,539	30,782	45.12%	52.33%	0.35%	116	507	80

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#### 8. Gereformeerde Bond

Year	Membership	Growth	Growth in %	% of Dutch population	Local congre- gations	Average con- gregation size	Municipalities with GBs
1973	598,041			4.47%	239	2,502	123
1974	624,438	26,397	4.23%	4.63%	262	2,383	130
1975	625,538	1,100	0.18%	4.60%	263	2,378	130
1976	631,368	5,830	0.92%	4.60%	236	2,675	128
1977	649,213	17,845	2.75%	4.71%	269	2,413	133
1978	633,095	-16,119	-2.55%	4.57%	243	2,605	130
1979	640,606	7,512	1.17%	4.60%	278	2,304	140
1980	628,544	-12,062	-1.92%	4.48%	621	1,012	133
1981	633,479	4,935	0.78%	4.46%	624	1,015	135
1982	658,489	25,010	3.80%	4.62%	296	2,225	147
1983	650,714	-7,776	-1.19%	4.54%	465	1,399	140
1984	644,272	-6,441	-1.00%	4.48%	301	2,140	140
1985	648,056	3,784	0.58%	4.48%	306	2,118	150
1986	635,008	-13,048	-2.05%	4.37%	311	2,045	143
1987	629,568	-5,441	-0.86%	4.31%	311	2,024	137
1988	648,183	18,616	2.87%	4.40%	312	2,078	143
1989	677,175	28,992	4.28%	4.57%	315	2,150	151
1990	676,489	-686	-0.10%	4.54%	316	2,141	150
1991	668,752	-7,737	-1.16%	4.46%	318	2,103	152
1992	660,115	-8,638	-1.31%	4.36%	271	2,436	151

1993	657,475	-2,640	-0.40%	4.31%	322	2,042	154
1994	646,334	-11,141	-1.72%	4.21%	321	2,014	155
1995	624,614	-21,720	-3.48%	4.05%	316	1,977	154
1996	622,302	-2,312	-0.37%	4.02%	321	1,939	157
1997	611,646	-10,656	-1.74%	3.93%	318	1,923	157
1998	602,833	-8,813	-1.46%	3.85%	323	1,866	159
1999	603,488	655	0.11%	3.83%	324	1,863	159
2000	602,520	-968	-0.16%	3.80%	328	1,837	159
2001	594,853	-7,667	-1.29%	3.72%	333	1,786	161
2002	580,091	-14,762	-2.54%	3.60%	333	1,742	162
2003	572,417	-7,674	-1.34%	3.54%	335	1,709	162
2004	511,810	-60,607	-11.84%	3.15%	327	1,568	149
2005	468,779	-43,031	-9.18%	2.87%	318	1,474	155
2006	468,497	-282	-0.06%	2.87%	319	1,469	155
2007	409,427	-59,070	-14.43%	2.50%	301	1,360	147
2008	409,230	-197	-0.05%	2.49%	303	1,351	147
2009	387,192	-22,038	-5.69%	2.35%	290	1,335	139
2010	384,079	-3,113	-0.81%	2.32%	282	1,362	137
2011	365,479	-18,600	-5.09%	2.19%	281	1,301	138
2012	355,979	-9,500	-2.67%	2.13%	278	1,281	134
2013	340,877	-15,102	-4.43%	2.03%	276	1,235	129
2014	335,902	-4,975	-1.48%	2.00%	276	1,217	129
2015	333,961	-1,941	-0.58%	1.97%	275	1,214	129

# Appendix B Demographic statistics

### 1. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths	Baptised adults	Marriages	Mixed mar- riages	Church mar- riages	Mixed church mar- riages	Deaths of baptised members	Deaths of confessing members
1947	15,240	8,588	9,760	395			4,329	769	612	3,023
1948	14,481	8,147	9,479	367			4,013	728	519	2,897
1949	14,937	8,745	9,011	441			3,870	696	537	3,516
1950	14,697	8,508	9,275	353			4,138	662	413	3,304
1951	14,920	9,344	10,406	431			4,180	726	404	3,481
1952	15,431	9,435	10,309	476			4,942	808	393	3,467
1953	15,969	9,180	9,778	451			4,883	759	474	3,807
1954	15,611	8,832	9,322	468			4,910	821	363	3,724
1955	15,760	9,178	9,397	455			5,109	843	360	4,044
1956	16,218	9,359	9 <i>,</i> 359	481			5,334	900	426	4,113
1957	16,320	9,631	9,631	560			5,427	957	389	4,124
1958	16,878	9,575	9,575	500			5,296	923	659	4,281
1959	16,758	9,218	9,218	523			4,933	927	422	4,327
1960	16,660	9,628	9,628	549			5,280	970	399	4,570
1961	16,942	9,730	9,730	734			5,183	1,018	403	4,344
1962	17,147	9,826	9,826	695			5,285	1,044	422	4,576
1963	17,044	9,792	9,792	648	6,507	1,488	5,449	1,186	399	4,794

1964	17,796	10,365	10,365	752	7,096	1,733	5,977	1,350	442	4,879
1965	17,785	10,602	10,602	686	7,467	1,892	6,300	1,518	402	5,057
1966	17,607	10,997	10,997	676	7,890	2,143	6,654	1,728	431	5,156
1967	17,113	11,025	11,025	666	8,529	2,321	7,099	1,815	606	5,090
1968	17,069	11,241	11,241	668	8,680	2,585	7,057	2,067	452	5,469
1969	17,190	10,477	10,477	595	8,467	2,608	6,884	2,074	441	5,441
1970	16,624	9,657	9,657	535	8,434	2,737	6,879	2,204	519	5,786
1971	15,426	9,489	9,489	532	8,845	3,130	6,870	2,348	453	5,607
1972	14,761	9,134	9,134	521	8,559	3,316	6,659	2,418	467	5,882
1973	12,995	9,533	9,533	545	7,846	3,290	6,133	2,409	448	5,726
1974	12,220	9,585	9,585	602	7,559	3,315	5,898	2,431	434	5,655
1975	11,465	9,651	9,651	507	6,901	2,991	5,425	2,228	364	5,762
1976	11,309	9,547	9,547	510	6,647	2,964	5,133	2,077	506	5,999
1977	10,992	9,230	9,230	538	6,486	2,940	5,027	2,065	368	5,773
1978	10,873	9,350	9,350	570	6,240	2,848	4,569	1,949	447	5 <i>,</i> 855
1979	10,586	8,840	8,840	502	6,007	2,796	4,629	1,940	466	5,780
1980	10,718	7,974	7,974	402	6,132	2,830	4,470	1,861	378	5,997
1981	10,311	7,820	7,820	434	5,766	2,764	4,230	1,809	344	5,938
1982	9,559	7,142	7,142	460	5,580	2,681	4,075	1,743	375	5,969
1983	9,308	7,104	7,104	367	5,260	2,617	3,825	1,742	377	6,215
1984	8,998	6,366	6,366	331	4,932	2,439	3,609	1,602	371	6,016
1985	8,877	6,231	6,231	311	4,825	2,916	3,497	1,530	344	6,251
1986	9,019	6,128	6,128	298	4,770	2,293	3,374	1,399	348	6,219
1987	8,612	6,063	6,063	335	4,541	2,239	3,164	1,311	342	6,112
1988	7,820	5,598	5,598	310	4,509	2,286	3,043	1,291	366	6,154
1989	7,648	5,317	5,323						365	6,073
1990	7,794	5,406	5,387			400	5,982			
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1991	7,478	4,902	4,892			378	6,292			
1992	7,275	4,456	4,479			353	5,982			
1993	7,022	4,229	4,229			355	6,560			

## 2. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	Baptisms	Confessions of baptised members	Confessions of others	Deaths of baptised members	Deaths of confessing members
1962	1,399	720	157	33	364
1963	1,362	751	170	35	422
1964	1,481	646	113	41	386
1965	1,447	754	135	50	385
1966	1,464	751	121	36	394
1967	1,464	834	110	47	472
1968	1,431	871	93	58	403
1969	1,481	987	138	41	456
1970	1,561	826	143	29	548
1971	1,458	898	149	29	506
1972	1,457	885	122	32	518
1973	1,352	918	117	32	539
1974	1,273	916	104	32	505
1975	1,199	923	124	40	473
1976	1,254	946	123	43	593
1977	1,239	970	99	33	518
1978	1,249	1,012	119	50	556
1979	1,284	940	89	44	585
1980	1,243	994	85	35	525
1981	1,358	1,031	101	17	547

1982	1,337	944	73	35	574
1983	1,399	996	81	34	609
1984	1,315	925	84	37	622
1985	1,393	980	62	44	567
1986	1,356	976	67	27	618
1987	1,344	929	55	33	614
1988	1,331	890	59	28	626
1989	1,270	934	83	38	571
1990	1,305	966	62	29	638
1991	1,286	884	55	43	612
1992	1,263	937	47	39	647
1993	1,246	912	62	36	632
1994	1,208	824	73	37	699
1995	1,195	873	68	39	652
1996	1,196	846	59	48	659
1997	1,171	881	71	25	628
1998	1,156	790	44	38	685
1999	1,145	774	60	19	659
2000	1,156	814	47	45	681
2001	1,105	700	51	44	639
2002	1,064	673	36	38	639
2003	1,035	743	53	44	605
2004	1,025	725	40	40	681
2005	1,052	772	85	44	647
2006	1,009	822	61	35	680
2007	1,056	775	79	35	581

2008	1,058	809	55	19	623
2009	1,070	764	78	32	618
2010	1,086	752	95	25	590
2011	1,078	749	50	43	624
2012	1,086	657	96	37	610
2013	1,053	764	64	41	596
2014	1,013	691	73	57	602
2015	1,020	612	88	37	561

## 3. Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt

Year	Baptisms	Confessions of baptised members	Confessions of others	Deaths of baptised members	Deaths of confessing members
1972	1,587	1,147		20	355
1973	1,865	1,338		27	450
1974	2,041	1,553		35	454
1975	2,153	1,496		38	465
1976	2,270	1,646		32	558
1977	2,279	1,628		46	530
1978	2,395	1,743		27	537
1979	2,422	1,776		32	552
1980	2,410	1,523		30	532
1981	1,848	1,614		21	419
1982	2,479	1,587		18	549
1983	2,524	1,653		23	593
1984	2,536	1,758		26	577
1985	2,482	1,761		31	609
1986	2,444	1,777		28	579
1987	2,403	1,804		40	652
1988	2,405	1,769		34	639
1989	2,426	1,821		27	606
1990	2,404	1,861	87	22	618
1991	2,371	1,832	109	22	678

1992	2,331	1,840	94	25	656
1993	2,355	1,880	123	25	631
1994	2,174	1,869	128	20	692
1995	2,235	1,909	1,909	22	706
1996	2,157	1,865	1,865	25	710
1997	2,201	2,039	2,039	26	748
1998	2,256	2,033	2,033	19	723
1999	2,170	1,992	1,992	26	715
2000					
2001	2,180	1,899	1,899	29	747
2002	2,155	1,833	1,833	13	682
2003	2,066	1,943	1,943	30	629
2004	1,923	1,683	1,683	30	635
2005	1,841	1,757	1,757	28	671
2006	1,824	1,700	1,700	16	585
2007	1,837	1,704	1,704	16	614
2008	1,802	1,736	1,736	20	622
2009	1,964	1,655	1,655	38	650
2010	1,916	1,545	1,545	27	600
2011	1,744	1,628	1,628	11	611
2012	1,745	1,450	1,450	23	690
2013	1,820	1,393	1,393	19	621
2014	1,628	1,364	1,364	17	662
2015	1,604	1,370	1,370	24	657

#### 4. Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	Baptisms	Confessions	Deaths of baptised members	Deaths of confessing members
1985	520	424	9	190
1986	434	443	4	165
1987	517	470	6	205
1988	469	475	1	181
1989	498	456	7	219
1990	465	449	11	205
1991	442	445	7	207
1992	441	383	4	203
1993	423	369	4	188
1994	462	372	14	228
1995	427	343	6	213
1996	408	351	3	233
1997	412	354	15	226
1998	387	310	4	230
1999	410	298	3	221
2000	434	333	7	204
2001	481	359	11	224
2002	441	351	7	237
2003	373	314	9	239
2004	405	368	7	210

2005	411	364	30	208
2006	467	350	22	271
2007	424	340	15	220
2008	429	442	14	167
2009	470	353	27	190
2010	429	310	9	205
2011	498	328	6	136
2012	444	271	17	148
2013	479	301	25	186
2014				
2015	392	272	17	121

#### 5. Gereformeerde Gemeenten

Year	Baptisms	Deaths
2005	2,197	623
2006	2,271	605
2007	2,178	605
2008	2,119	598
2009	2,283	555
2010	2,164	612
2011	2,168	606
2012	2,204	586
2013	2,130	606
2014	2,155	637
2015	2,145	586

# Appendix C Border traffic

#### 1. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

Year	GKV	NHK	CGK	GG	NGK	RKK	EVL	HAZ	VEG	EVG	Misc Reformed	Misc	No church	Unknown
1948	502	790		53		42							89	
1949	538	894		16		54	20	6	11			81	82	393
1950	2,901	1,030	129	46		50	14	2	8			59	89	1,048
1951	845	981	122	51		53	10	2	9			79	126	585
1952	681	1,310	154	64		58	18	4	26			55	56	175
1953	546	1,252	194	83		120	17	1	22	17	12	38	135	118
1954	692	1,183	215	58		86	43	7	33	19	5	51	136	29
1955	478	1,370	181	77		116	32	4	46	16	8	23	197	304
1956	416	1,354	251	60		115	13	2	20	19	6	55	288	404
1957	430	1,599	305	69		109	21	2	26	41	9	80	535	249
1958	353	1,626	308	59		131	14	6	51	22	8	60	667	128
1959	313	1,717	267	69		135	32	3	34	66	9	58	689	121
1960	424	1,756	288	77		172	28		11	27	19	78	659	118
1961	479	1,769	354	81		162	25	9	27	28	40	90	782	96
1962	505	1,563	304	108		187	30	6	32	20	21	79	792	185
1963	411	1,567	336	91		126	15	8	29	34	10	139	712	202
1964	554	1,760	312	106		157	40		33	23	10	57	515	502
1965	712	1,845	326	109		184	26		47	47		120	685	11

	1966	568	1,891	355	82		220	30	44	33		90	711	13
-	1967	486	1,947	331	105		227	22	48	21	76	114	690	14
	1968	1,091	2,031	293	113		230	33	35	33	4	97	668	29
-	1969	459	1,813	227	83		238	19	29	16		94	595	43
	1970	500	1,675	221	61		245	27	49	35		72	535	44
-	1971	343	1,779	378	72		282	23	32	16		100	532	72
	1972	306	1,815	264	78		254	19	60	26		63	519	42
-	1973	334	1,744	292	86		277	30	37	16		62	545	35
	1974	299	1,777	352	91		263	23	91	28		68	602	54
-	1975	290	1,733	267	75		321	20	48	30	12	114	507	39
	1976	286	1,754	235	72		302	19	58	19		95	510	117
_	1977	276	1,940	236	70		304		44	22		116	571	42
	1978	333	1,822	229	86		323	21	34	28		86	593	36
-	1979	284	1,808	281	44		267		39	23		76	531	47
	1980	307	1,717	311	58		294	15	22	44		96	430	39
-	1981	192	1,720	333	47	70	261		59	46		104	434	72
	1982	184	1,675	234	48	79	268		66	33		80	460	37
_	1983	164	1,648	332	49	88	259		30	31		128	367	18
	1984	159	1,627	242	44	72	245		39	26		144	331	8
_	1985	125	1,548	277	38	60	213		38	26		177	311	14
	1986	145	1,542	314	49	61	228		15	28		192	298	11
_	1987	122	1,498	326	33	73	241		25	14		185	335	1
	1988	162	1,443	293	55	81	175		38	33		176	310	3
_	1989	214	1,434	276	50	93	201		24	34		211	283	38
	1990	187	1,391	299	48	51	182		21	10		367	154	111
_	1991	166	1,442	257	39	69	160		28	37		168	186	274

Year	CGK	GKv	NGK	GG
1962	189			
1963	158			
1964	161			
1965	173			
1966	217			
1967	172			42
1968	211			64
1969	292			37
1970	418			39
1971	424			46
1972	530	157		62
1973	445	195		50
1974	347	153		38
1975	498	123		35
1976	445	247		28
1977	453	90		39
1978	514	97		31
1979	338	98		33
1980	395	108		27
1981	451	94		23
1982	551	92		41
1983	569	78		18
1984	469	90		18

1.2. Outgoing members (from yearbooks of other denominations)

1985	495		152	23
1986	427	80	176	18
1987	304	59	144	23
1988	290	56	88	18
1989	319	65	129	18
1990	371	98	150	25
1991	307	37	132	14
1992	248		139	20
1993	284		125	23
1994	249		100	23
1995	302		131	20
1996	257		84	7
1997	271		126	7
1998	282		110	10
1999	313		93	11
2000	223		125	10
2001	165		146	14
2002	235		96	22
2003	241		87	6

## 2. Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	RKK	NHK	GKN	ннк	ΡΚΝ	GKv	NGK	GG	Evg	Misc Reformed	Misc	Unknown
1962	2	260	189			51		85		48	19	0
1963	11	224	158			65		76	2	71	15	1
1964	10	253	161			47		75	18	56	8	0
1965	6	275	173			59		88	1	93	13	0
1966	19	277	217			101		55	1	39	4	0
1967	9	384	172			90		41	5	92	14	
1968	10	287	211			66		110	5	55	8	0
1969	11	310	292			140		103	0	57	3	0
1970	15	305	418			157		74	3	93	9	0
1971	18	308	424			152		92	1	101	22	0
1972	26	304	530			202		104	7	72	11	
1973	16	274	445			52	70	110	0	45	12	0
1974	21	283	347			48	67	84	3	59	19	0
1975	17	291	498			53	59	100	4	46	15	0
1976	35	344	445			58	55	114	0	59	18	
1977	24	301	453			38	104	75	0	1,394	27	
1978	32	312	514			27	95	134	0	126	10	
1979	22	306	338			50	85	113	4	42	11	0
1980	26	278	395			51	61	88	0	49	24	
1981	34	331	451			24	87	76	2	297	14	

1	982	35	273	551			54	69	121	2	40	17	
1	983	28	242	569			60	117	53	2	43	17	
1	984	41	306	469			41	58	100	5	42	34	
1	985	23	338	495			30	101	78	8	48	4	
1	986	26	299	427			62	65	112	2	43	18	0
1	987	25	332	304			38	49	149	5	68	15	
1	988	27	309	290			39	64	97	12	37	23	0
1	989	32	333	319			62	83	126	18	57	18	0
1	990	18	295	371			55	61	134	7	45	10	0
1	991	29	320	307			65	101	140	8	44	11	0
1	992	21	324	248			63	81	134	3	42	12	0
1	993	14	391	284		9	45	80	102	14	54	13	0
1	994	27	337	249		23	69	65	94	5	54	24	0
1	995	24	313	302		12	84	67	105	12	14	33	0
1	996	26	402	257		18	81	47	127	10	56	25	1
1	997	21	372	271		31	108	81	133	28	52	17	0
1	998	16	400	282		27	97	68	111	39	26	6	0
1	999	18	373	313		35	86	55	140	29	46	7	4
2	000	27	363	223		32	138	70	97	18	16	15	4
2	001	20	371	165		31	138	57	130	23	43	3	35
2	002	16	308	235		42	117	49	154	27	50	22	7
2	003	14	330	241		54	178	65	201	30	51	28	5
2	004	27	339	203		62	175	63	168	11	28	8	25
2	005	22	359	205	24	266	203	96	199	7	69	29	10
2	006	21	230	254	31	288	311	83	186	19	57	40	22
2	007	16	245	111	40	296	353	82	238	23	51	35	14

2008	25	146	86	70	339	290	71	245	35	46	25	20
2009	15	176	118	71	306	293	52	282	12	35	26	7
2010	27	135	51	43	250	313	56	214	15	63	9	28
2011	13	143	30	79	315	255	44	181	11	47	21	86
2012	21	92	35	58	361	277	63	170	19	53	24	4
2013	17	109	36	102	352	337	57	180	19	39	41	23
2014	19	138	35	93	306	369	58	176	36	53	43	8
2015	24	80	40	104	286	301	28	205	27	49	44	11

Year	RKK	NHK	GKN	ннк	PKN	GKv	NGK	GG	Evg	Misc Reformed	Misc	Unknown
1962	4	238	231			40		60	20		11	18
1963	4	271	286			15		67	23	11	10	6
1964	3	324	275			34		67	15	0	18	16
1965	1	305	278			18		84	28	23	17	12
1966	4	330	244			23		89	36	29	18	14
1967	3	359	309			30		103	32	24	28	
1968	2	296	280			28		83	35	12	13	14
1969	5	324	237			22		100	19	20	28	8
1970	3	337	228			42		308	36	6	7	4
1971	9	329	247			12		211	21	21	22	16
1972	2	400	252			39		176	43	6	15	
1973	3	489	256			38	19	129	47	34	18	4
1974	5	413	238			33	16	149	55	22	32	29
1975	2	488	334			26	11	141	44	18	31	28

19	976	8	454	278		71	32	111	35	31	36	
19	977	5	410	264		38	19	88	28	27	42	
19	978	8	426	229		41	21	77	276	41	36	
19	979	7	437	229		55	27	67	48	34	32	8
19	980	5	508	256		24	25	78	149	23	43	
19	981	2	515	306		23	30	93	27	29	34	
19	982	13	473	297		31	26	75	32	63	35	
19	983	10	471	270		16	27	66	12	67	36	
19	984	5	501	291		30	52	60	18	82	35	
19	985	6	428	274		47	64	67	15	98	49	
19	986	2	541	302		25	83	83	14	71	63	28
19	987	5	675	338		19	77	92	21	95	39	
19	988	8	587	307		34	59	83	40	63	73	7
19	989	3	540	329	4	34	81	78	24	73	52	8
19	990	5	539	375		49	69	107	39	83	74	15
19	991	4	528	305	13	36	72	64	30	70	42	8
19	992	11	470	321	23	43	102	132	29	44	78	16
19	993	6	527	283	12	49	81	96	14	71	64	21
19	994	13	543	250	38	34	102	55	7	45	90	24
19	995	8	471	239	66	81	81	80	14	110	32	14
19	996	2	467	193	69	53	114	66	7	133	11	61
19	97	1	508	217	93	26	87	84	18	134	17	23
19	998	4	439	182	101	58	133	67	22	157	14	10
19	999	4	512	242	77	52	100	50	18	175	9	30
20	000	4	435	246	 72	39	100	123	14	143	20	29
20	001	14	481	173	68	91	165	87	14	214	17	66

2002	7	526	152		85	69	133	117	23	120	31	15
2003	4	399	142		70	58	114	110	5	172	41	37
2004	7	384	162		61	93	67	95	16	76	24	41
2005	11	225	75	48	310	67	135	34	9	120	39	57
2006	6	154	78	77	326	71	121	79	12	114	36	80
2007	5	173	64	76	341	102	120	56	11	131	32	60
2008	16	167	78	89	391	89	118	50	12	95	63	62
2009	14	128	56	97	432	83	123	92	2	147	49	51
2010	1	164	50	102	424	116	107	91	4	116	44	62
2011	4	152	23	88	458	98	91	77	8	84	31	47
2012	3	197	57	116	361	98	88	104	16	147	53	33
2013	1	182	30	110	451	106	83	79	5	182	37	59
2014	0	136	34	118	464	125	164	91	10	198	39	17
2015	1	150	58	55	458	118	88	46	8	159	52	73

## 3. Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt

Year	NGK	CGK	NVM	ΡΚΝ	GKN	GG	NHK	ннк	RKK	Misc	No church	Unknown
1972	130	13			157	11	64		8	3	24	
1973	119	43			195	7	73		14	8	33	8
1974	84	31			153	6	89		22	30	26	
1975	112	29			123	21	62		26	32	26	31
1976	89	52			247	4	75		32	15	25	15
1977	84	35			90	6	98		15	6	29	16
1978	91	43			97	10	65		15	24	40	13
1979	39	51			98	6	62		15	13	34	14
1980	77	22			108	7	58		16	28	40	19
1981	21	20			94	12	59		16	13	39	18
1982	56	45			92	17	70		12	14	32	7
1983	70	30			78		76		22	29	57	24
1984	88	42			90	5	57		23	24	33	28
1985	69	42					59		35	8		36
1986	30	34			80	24	43		21	13	28	
1987	43	25			59	5	39		20	24	47	13
1988	88	43			56	10	79		27	45	70	11
1989	79	28			65	15	77		26	34	44	13
1990	95	39			98	13	75		17	49	48	11
1991	81	28			37	10	77		24	49	37	

1992	47	48			5	26		63	30	42	16
1993	59	40			6	81		25	51	54	24
1994	33	45			2	76		23	46	58	43
1995	32	50			13	28		65	50	49	30
1996	44	55			15	95		29	61	66	39
1997	16	31			6	77		33	47	72	20
1998	57	26			6	60		21	47	56	53
1999	23	34			13	64		23	56	81	57
2000											
2001	23	63			16	93		14	65	78	42
2002	31	73			5	75		20	49	100	21
2003	36	40			10	99		23	64	61	13
2004	25	52			26	95		17	38	66	46
2005	36	64			24	134		23	53	73	51
2006	42	72		27	17	49		12	71	70	46
2007	30	55	9	154	16		16	10	102	128	148
2008	23	75	2	152	19		27	20	112	92	55
2009	36	49	9	193	15		9	16	78	87	68
2010	25	90		149	19		11	14	76	75	43
2011	35	83	41	197	9		45	9	96	95	56
2012	18	55	11	134	17		34	25	114	89	98
2013	22	48	20	199	18		9	17	82	106	153
2014	32	90	40	167	19		34	10	111	129	23
2015	25	49	41	205	35		28	11	199	107	57

Year	NGK	CGK	NVM	PKN	GKN	GG	NHK	ннк	RKK	Misc	No church	Unknown
1972	461	80			126	4	61		6	29	42	99
1973	174	23			85	2	61			7	104	137
1974	76	33			93	4	73		2	44	79	98
1975	53	36			114		78		2	33	68	152
1976	52	47			95	6	42			25	92	101
1977	55	15			95	2	62			28	99	94
1978	49	34			70		69			23	130	103
1979	29	34			174	3	84		8	40	103	78
1980	36	35			107	5	76			70	101	137
1981	20	18			116		63		3	38	127	76
1982	36	29			118	7	68			27	109	16
1983	43	70			107	7	77		5	39	115	164
1984	35	42			79	11	78		4	27	147	160
1985	24	31			77		44		2	23	128	200
1986	22	46			65	11	53			54	155	139
1987	36	40			92	10	74			122	116	156
1988	24	40			85	6	38		7	71	140	158
1989	24	45			88	2	90		2	63	133	190
1990	37	36			110		61		3	112	168	155
1991	23	76			125	5	82			82	181	119
1992	39	54			98	13	5		67	33	136	207
1993	38	41			104		56		3	45	162	166
1994	33	51			80		67		3	43	58	43

1995	52	66			102		5		59	45	160	225
1996	60	62			102	3	84		5	64	192	177
1997	63	86			90		92			84	209	174
1998	163	90			83		77			82	235	186
1999	92	86			91		66		4	113	187	408
2000												
2001	151	116			79	11	113			177	222	254
2002	140	104			49	12	99		5	159	288	290
2003	106	125			87	11	99			177	267	263
2004	44	116			126	6	108			236	299	272
2005	67	102	831		106	3	160			274	288	412
2006	68	149	171	120	42		45			404	287	413
2007	71	160	99	210		5		17	4	410	328	401
2008	156	179	46	255		6		13	4	603	322	350
2009	153	216	55	219		4		10	4	563	270	484
2010	129	197	37	210		2		11		623	293	379
2011	116	198	134	238				17		389	382	541
2012	116	166	56	278		11		43		588	471	327
2013	186	273	26	266		1		15	6	557	467	545
2014	68	220	28	248		2		7	2	521	509	413
2015	86	174	38	238		13		15	5	539	554	485

#### 4. Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken

Year	GKv	CGK	GKN	NHK	PKN	SoW	GG	EV/Ba	Misc	RKK
1985	35	64	152	90			2	1	6	10
1986	26	104	176	58			5	10	1	8
1987	34	80	144	89			3	16	3	15
1988	44	76	88	79			8	19	10	13
1989	44	88	129	97			6	5	11	7
1990	37	72	150	88			2	23	4	5
1991	39	82	132	73			2	13	9	13
1992	31	70	139	94			1	14	12	22
1993	34	86	125	111			5	24	2	7
1994	31	102	100	75		17	4	26	6	12
1995	54	111	131	112		40	6	13	3	12
1996	71	92	84	99		25	2	22	9	18
1997	76	107	126	118		53	1	37	9	5
1998	140	135	110	102		36	7	23	18	11
1999	111	96	93	102		52	14	12	21	5
2000	89	86	125	97		48	4	25	43	8
2001	177	179	146	127		42	8	39	16	11
2002	157	80	96	117		72	5	41	33	9
2003	90	145	87	183		59	23	26	84	14
2004	133	81	330	171		70	14	26	24	9

2005	169	107	80	140	82	6	29	28	18
2006	120	120			746	6	46	79	21
2007	188	126			340	14	45	57	6
2008	220	148			371	9	56	60	21
2009	185	128			249	13	55	16	12
2010	152	118			294	3	76	17	16
2011	211	80			293	9	83	36	12
2012	201	91			308	17	53	38	11
2013	180	106			336	9	76	37	16
2014									
2015	160	83			305	10	89	42	17

Year	GKv	CGK	GKN	NHK	PKN	SoW	GG	EV/Ba	Misc	RKK
1985	53	62	164	116			3	41		1
1986	37	65	133	109			1	49	19	1
1987	48	39	139	135			2	84	82	3
1988	30	48	119	142			0	39	12	2
1989	54	90	125	98			2	24	35	13
1990	94	63	147	87			2	60	61	8
1991	51	72	165	75			2	41	32	1
1992	36	63	155	104			3	43	40	2
1993	34	60	94	98			0	51	51	1
1994	38	52	115	123		37	5	32	27	3
1995	47	52	104	63		82	0	67	50	1

1996	33	55	92	89		20	1	39	33	5
1997	18	38	66	108		45	0	42	20	9
1998	32	69	70	108		52	0	26	11	2
1999	25	47	65	102		35	4	48	19	1
2000	33	43	76	113		56	3	85	90	1
2001	24	56	86	77		69	0	80	75	0
2002	31	44	44	50		46	4	63	60	8
2003	27	79	55	77		51	4	99	126	9
2004	26	30	40	71		76	3	123		4
2005	54	92	28	47	120		2	121		1
2006	46	111			195		1	149		2
2007	49	45			218		0	230		4
2008	50	55			213		1	162		4
2009	51	54			206		5	181		1
2010	48	55			208		0	49		6
2011	48	29			158		0	151		3
2012	54	60			219		1	191		4
2013	49	51			210		14	222		7
2014										
2015	42	37			154		2	140		2

#### 5. Gereformeerde Gemeenten

Year	NHK	GKN	PKN	ннк	GKv	CGK	GGN	OGG	RKK	Misc
1967	134	42			5	90	79	88		12
1968	195	64				81	62	81	4	70
1969	222	37				97	77	96	6	
1970	172	39			3	329	57	60	7	13
1971	216	46			7	181	61	113	6	11
1972	175	62			4	178	161	166	4	22
1973	196	50			2	158	120	141	3	20
1974	217	38				137	79	115		18
1975	285	35				159	76	105		20
1976	249	28				106	68	109		23
1977	236	39				128	40	78		43
1978	291	31				86	132	69		27
1979	262	33				79	67	102		80
1980	244	27				88	72	66		37
1981	262	23				81	54	82		66
1982	333	41				93	133	114		60
1983	275	18				69	150	108		46
1984	275	18				55	94	99		22
1985	222	23				60	117	113		33
1986	175	18				74	100	90		26

1987	199	23			107	87	182	59
1988	233	18			75	104	167	29
1989	227	18			63	138	219	55
1990	197	25			101	68	145	39
1991	212	14			78	72	139	24
1992	229	20			131	156	204	68
1993	216	23			112	110	163	43
1994	216	23			112	110	163	43
1995	217	20			80	160	136	75
1996	209	7			70	138	162	34
1997	237	7			79	117	134	48
1998	248	10			77	188	134	120
1999	286	11			67	149	220	56
2000	290	10			123	200	165	73
2001	201	14			65	181	126	83
2002	209	22			126	106	171	59
2003	270	6			215	133	208	72
2004	277	19			115	148	273	
2005	204	7	118	46	43	199	189	21
2006			143	127	75	163	189	36
2007			126	157	66	188	271	8
2008			109	129	51	200	278	42
2009			122	114	78	201	295	40
2010			122	138	87	283	263	16
2011			100	152	64	219	264	17
2012			99	106	102	229	164	13

2013	93	176	70	219	217	102
2014	127	197	90	277	291	27
2015	101	122	76	205	284	51

Year	NHK	GKN	ΡΚΝ	ннк	GKv	CGK	GGN	OGG	RKK	Misc
1967	253	51				42	38	34		10
1968	347	66				64	36	36		20
1969	384	58			8	92	103	57		22
1970	295	48				46	29	41		14
1971	357	41			5	70	42	31		30
1972	368	35			6	68	59	49		37
1973	469	56			4	69	61	52		127
1974	569	75				69	61	54		217
1975	527	34				89	50	44		262
1976	551	52				96	96	82		384
1977	615	44				73	64	40		193
1978	566	31				86	49	50		244
1979	573	44				72	86	69		321
1980	615	35				78	82	50		318
1981	670	38				46	25	44		254
1982	823	27				111	41	75		225
1983	817	36				63	65	63		492
1984	707	31				79	47	27		311
1985	652	23				50	56	131		386

1986	697	22			118	39	67	305
1987	721	32			153	54	39	443
1988	810	15			91	53	75	376
1989	915	24			133	91	73	499
1990	781	38			104	47	35	391
1991	944	35			131	46	47	489
1992	854	23			135	43	57	454
1993	849	29			92	63	35	337
1994	849	29			92	63	35	337
1995	834	16			92	74	24	229
1996	826	22			122	26	89	417
1997	764	20			124	55	63	388
1998	858	29			110	42	63	345
1999	852	17			114	46	114	337
2000	857	17			78	47	140	340
2001	948	23			128	40	97	405
2002	887	14			157	34	61	87
2003	947	10			158	36	59	133
2004	851	20			189	39	93	267
2005	301	9	405	197	42	42	38	60
2006			684	421	210	43	55	79
2007			715	529	210	57	47	64
2008			737	444	200	59	62	56
2009			744	509	256	38	89	74
2010			777	441	182	46	22	31
2011			603	444	163	32	44	47

2012	725	496	143	53	52	52
2013	772	449	178	45	40	164
2014	671	400	174	30	44	67
2015	667	443	173	53	49	92

#### 6. Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland

## 6.1. Incoming members

Year	GG	GGN (bv)	OGG	PKN	ННК	CGK	Misc	Unknown
2010	40	112	60	32	7	3	4	
2011	30	469	51	28	38	4	5	
2012	54	59	58	30	37	5	10	
2013	42	31	52	32	15	10	4	
2014	48	34	91	56	16	2	3	6
2015	52	32	83	6	29	34		

Year	GG	GGN (bv)	OGG	PKN	ННК	CGK	Misc	Unknown
2010	168		95	24	127	23	5	99
2011	113	12	42	21	66	13	2	85
2012	120	1	32	43	79	19	8	115
2013	206	9	34	48	79	32	21	144
2014	216	13	29	40	107	15	8	112
2015	176	19	81	33	84	8	6	147

#### 7. Hersteld Hervormde Kerken (from yearbooks of other denominations)

## 7.1. Incoming members

Year	CGK	GKv	NGK	GG
2005	48		47	197
2006	77		19	421
2007	76	17	3	529
2008	89	13	2	444
2009	97	10	1	509
2010	102	11	23	441
2011	88	17	29	444
2012	116	43	37	496
2013	110	15	37	449
2014	118	7	33	400
2015	55	15	29	443

Year	CGK	GKv	NGK	GG
2005	24		140	46
2006	31		38	127
2007	40	16	14	157
2008	70	27		129
2009	71	9	2	114
2010	43	11	34	138

2011	79	45	35	152
2012	58	34	59	106
2013	102	9	55	176
2014	93	34	65	197
2015	104	28	74	122

## Appendix D List of abbreviations

CGK Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken GB Gereformeerde Bond in de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland GG Gereformeerde Gemeenten Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland GGN GGN Gereformeerde Gemeenten in Nederland (buiten (bv) verband) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland GKN GKv Gereformeerde Kerken vrijgemaakt ННК Hersteld Hervormde Kerk NGK Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk NHK OGG Oud Gereformeerde Gemeenten PKN Protestantse Kerk in Nederland RKK Rooms-Katholieke Kerk

Christian Reformed Churches Reformed Association in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands Reformed Congregations Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the Netherlands (unconnected) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Reformed Churches Liberated Restored Reformed Church Netherlands Reformed Churches Dutch Reformed Church Old-Reformed Congregations Protestant Church in the Netherlands Roman Catholic Church