



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



Website: classisniagara.ca; e-mail: statedclerk@classisniagara.ca

85th session (1st session: September 24, 1986)

Wednesday, October 19, 9:30 A.M.

Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Dunnville, ON

Chairman: Rev. Derek Bouma; **Vice-chairman:** Rev. Steven deBoer; **Stated Clerk:** John TeBrake

DELEGATES, PLEASE NOTE:

1. Please bring your Classical Credentials with you to the meeting.
2. If this is your first time as a delegate to a Classis Niagara session, please read and sign the Form of Subscription **prior to the meeting**.

There will be a designated table for both the above

AGENDA

1. Welcome and opening devotions

2. Constitution of Classis by the Chairman, Rev. Derek Bouma

- Credentials/roll call presented by the host church, Bethel CRC
- Acknowledgment of signing of first-time delegates.
- Declare Classis constituted

3. Time schedule:

- Gathering, fellowship: 9:00 to 9:30 AM
- **Meeting commences at 9:30 AM.**
- Lunch is planned to be from 12:00 noon to approximately 1:15 PM.
- An afternoon break will be scheduled at the call of the Chairman.
- Scheduled speakers during the classis session include:
 - Rev. John de Vries Jr., Canadian Restorative Justice Liaison

4. Committee appointment confirmations:

- 4.1 Credentials: Mountainview (to chair) and Rehoboth
- 4.2 Advisory re overtures: Smithville (to chair) and Grace. Please see overture from Trinity at page 13.

5. Classical Administrative Committee Reports

- 5.1 Executive Committee (*pages 3-4*)
- 5.2 Stated Clerk / correspondence (*pages 4-6*)
- 5.3 Treasurer's report; proposed budget for the year 2012 (*pages 6-8*)
- 5.4 Classis Ministry Leadership Team
- 5.5 Classical Nominating Committee
- 5.6 Safe Church Team
- 5.7 Church Counselor reports: Rev. David Tigchelaar, re Fruitland; Rev. Greg Fluit, re Mountainview; Rev. Ryan Braam, re Jubilee Fellowship
- 5.8 Regional Pastors' report: Rev. David Tigchelaar and/or Rev. Rudy Ouwehand

6. Classical Ministries Committee Report

7. Brock University Chaplain's Report (*pages 8-12*)

8. Shalom Manor Chaplain's Report (*pages 12-13*)

9. Church visitor reports:

Rev. John Heidinga, Elder George Lunshof – Smithville, Bethany, Fruitland
Rev. Jim Dekker, Elder Bill Thies – Jubilee Fellowship, Maranatha, Grace
Rev. Rich Loerop, Elder Cor VanSoelen – Rehoboth, Mountainview, Covenant, Bethel
Rev. Rudy Ouwehand, Elder Lowell Witvoet – Providence, Riverside, Trinity

10. Report of Credentials Committee

- The committee is comprised of delegates from Mountainview (to chair) and Rehoboth.

11. Report of Overture Advisory Committee:

- The committee is comprised of delegates from Smithville (to chair) and Grace. Please see overture on page 13

12. Denominational and Other Reports

12.1 Denominational reports

12.2 Redeemer University College (*pages 14-15*)

13. Next meeting:

Date: February 15, 2012

Agenda Deadline: January 1, 2012

Location: An invitation has been received from Trinity CRC, St. Catharines

Chairman: Rev. Steven deBoer

Vice-chairman: Rev. John Heidinga

Credentials: Covenant (to chair) and Jubilee

Overture Advisory: Riverside (to chair) and Providence

Following meetings: May 16 (or 23?) and October 17, 2012

14. Closing devotions

AGENDA ITEM 5.1: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the Executive Committee, September 7, 2011

Present: Rev. Rudy Ouwehand (Chair); Rev. Steven deBoer, Pastor Frank Engelage, Ms. Emma Winter (Treasurer); Mr. John TeBrake (Stated Clerk)

1) **Opening:** Rev. Ouwehand read Psalm 32 and led in opening prayer.

2) Financial matters:

- Proposed budget for 2012: Ms. Winter presented the proposed budget for 2012, and after a few minor adjustments the Executive Committee approved it and **recommends** it to Classis for its approval (see pages 6-8.) (The proposed budget retains the Ministry Share for the Village Church at \$6.00, as requested by Pastor Mike Collins, subject to a letter of support from the council of Covenant CRC, the lead church of the sponsoring churches)
- Ms. Winter will initiate contact with Robertson Hall Insurance in order to obtain liability insurance for the Classis (e.g., officers and directors, employees, Safe Church Team, Classis' assets)
- During the budget review it was noted that there is no medical insurance in place for the Brock University Chaplain as provided for in the budget, and as directed by Classis (see minutes, May 26, 2010, item 5). Ms. Winter will pursue this with the Chair of the Brock University Chaplaincy Committee.
- Auditors: the Executive Committee **recommends** that the firm of Partridge Iggulden be appointed to provide a review report for the financial transactions and statements for the year 2012

3) **Church visitor teams:** Elders Cor VanSoelen and Lowell Witvoet have indicated their desire to be relieved of this duty after many years of service. Present teams are (changes highlighted):

Rev. John Heidinga, Elder George Lunshoff– Smithville, Bethany, Fruitland,
Rev. Jim Dekker, Elder Bill Thies – Jubilee Fellowship, Maranatha, Grace
Rev. Richard Loerop, Elder **Dick VanDyke** – Rehoboth, Mountainview, Covenant, **Bethel**
Rev. Rudy Ouwehand, Elder **TBA** – Providence, Riverside, Trinity

4) **Ecclesiastical Credentials:** Rev. Ben Ponsen from the Kemptville (ON) CRC has accepted a call from the Fruitland CRC. Ecclesiastical credentials were processed

5) **Requests from Classical Credentials:** There was a request from a council “that Classis Niagara sponsor a discussion led by Stan Baker and Steve Kabetu, CRC members from Friendship CRC in Toronto and of Hope Fellowship in Courtice on the Belhar Confession at an upcoming classis meeting. A beneficial discussion was held in January at the meeting of Classis Toronto and this would benefit our classis as well”

The Executive Committee noted that this has already been dealt with at a previous meeting (May 2010) and suggests that if Synod 2012 adopts the Belhar to have an adapted presentation to assist in implementing the confession, and understanding how it impacts us.

6) **Correspondence** was dealt with. See pages 4-6.

7) **Agenda** for October 19 meeting was reviewed. There is an overture from Trinity CRC “that Classis Niagara elect each delegate from different member churches within the Classis”. Smithville and Grace CRCs will form the overture advisory committee.

8) Corporate matters:

- For the record, we need to update the names of the officers of the Corporation (Classis Niagara of the Christian Reformed Church of North America). The directors are:
 - Rev. Rudy Ouwehand, Chair

- Rev. Steven deBoer, Vice-Chair
- John TeBrake, Secretary
- Emma Winter, Treasurer
- Pastor Frank Engelage, Director

- For purposes of registering as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency, our solicitor suggests including the following in our letters patent. The Executive Committee **recommends** that the following be added as one of the objects in our Letters Patent: *“b. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Christian Reformed Churches, which are also registered charities under the Income Tax Act (Canada), by expertly managing and administrating the regional charitable activities of the various Christian Reformed Churches in the Niagara area, which shall permit the more effective regional advancement of the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with the faith of the Christian Reformed Church.”*
- Brock University has requested that we sign a letter of agreement undertaking responsibility for compensation, insurance, and liability for our chaplain at Brock. Brock, in turn, will provide working space and consent and support to the chaplain to be part of its Faith and Life Centre. The letter serves to establish the relationship between Brock and our chaplain at the university. The letter will be signed by Rev. Rudy Ouwehand on behalf of Classis Niagara.

9) **Classical Ministries Committee:** There was some discussion as to how to engage the various ministries of Classis as a total ministry. The Classical Ministries Coordinator, Pastor Frank Engelage, undertook to host a meeting of leaders of all ministries in our Classis along with the CMC Executive Committee to share visions and purposes. This meeting would take place in the spring of 2012, and could be planned to be an annual event.

10) **Next meeting:** October 12, with Revs. Bouma (Chair for the October meeting of Classis) and deBoer (Vice-chair)

Closing: Pastor Engelage led in a closing prayer.

AGENDA ITEM 5.2: WORK OF STATED CLERK/CORRESPONDENCE

Summary of correspondence from May 2011 meeting of Classis Niagara to September 7, 2011

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>
1	May 17	From Elizabeth Guillaume-Koene, Classis Coach, The Network, CRCNA: requesting an update from those classes that participated with the Classis Ministry Renewal Team several years ago in order to share experiences among classes.	This request was also sent to the Classical Ministries Coordinator
2	May 25	To Ms. Dee Recker, Director, Synodical Services, CRCNA: the results of the Classis Niagara ballot as part of the vote for a Region 4 representative to the CTS Board of Trustees	RFI
3	May 26	To Ms. Katy Hendry, Ministers' Pension and Retirement Office, CRCNA: that Classis Niagara endorsed the request of the following ministers for a pre-retirement in-service pension distribution and that they become inactive in the Ministers' Pension Plan as of June 30, 2011 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rev. Rudy Ouwehand, whose request had been approved by his council; ● Rev. James Dekker, subject to approval by his council 	RFI; Rev. Dekker's request was approved by his council, as per e-mail from that council's clerk dated June 10

4	May 30	From Allan and Maria Smedes, on behalf of the Danish Bangladesh Leprosy Mission: requesting recommendation for offerings in the churches of Classis Niagara	Forwarded to Ms. Karen Vermeer, one of Classis Niagara's diaconal ministry developers.
5	May 31	From Rev. Dr. Richard Loerop, pastor at Maranatha CRC: a request for a letter of reference confirming his work history in order for him to apply for residency in Canada	A "to whom it may concern" letter was provided, including information generally available in the CRCNA Yearbook 2011.
6	June 23	From Pastors Erick Shuringa and Norm Sennema on behalf of the Eastern Canada Leadership Development Network: requesting continued financial support	Forwarded to Pastor Frank Engelage, Classical Ministries Coordinator for his consideration - recommendation
7	June 23	From Mr. John Schouwenaar, Admin. Clerk of Trinity CRC, inviting classis to meet there for its February 2012 meeting	Executive Committee recommends acceptance of this invitation
8	July 28	From Rev. John. DeVries, Canadian CRC Restorative Justice Liaison: requesting to make a presentation at our October 19 meeting	On agenda
9	July 28	From Providence CRC, requesting the appointment of a church counselor as per CO Art. 9 to enable them to call a second ordained pastor (of Missions and Discipleship)	The Executive Committee has appointed Rev. John Heidinga (Bethel CRC) to serve, and he has accepted to do so.
10	July 12	From Mr. John Meiboom, Stated Clerk of Classis Toronto: a request for advocacy from members of Classis Niagara (along with other classes and persons) on behalf of a daughter of retired missionaries who requires a drug therapy that is not currently funded	RFI
11	July 25	From Rev. Ron Klimp, Director, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry, CRCNA: copy of letter to Niagara Health System, of Endorsement Renewal for Chaplain Al VandenBoogaard as chaplain for the Niagara Health System in Niagara Falls.	RFI; also sent to Covenant CRC, where Mr. VandenBoogaard is ordained as an elder
12	August 8	From Ms. Dee Recker, Director of Synodical Services, CRCNA: anticipated vacancies on the denominational boards as of July 2012. How this affects Region 4 (Classes Chatham, Hamilton, Huron and Niagara): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOT: N/A • Back to God Ministries International: N/A • Calvin College: N/A • Calvin Theological Seminary: Mr. Henk VanderLaan is at end of 1st term, and will be submitted for re-appointment unless there are reservations • Christian Reformed Home Missions: Delegate Michael Talsma and Alternate Al Martens are both at end of 2nd term, and not eligible for reelection. Nominations of non-clergy persons are requested • Christian Reformed World Missions: N/A • Faith Alive Christian Resources: Rev. Pieter Pereboom at end of 2nd term. Nominations of clergy persons are requested 	<p>Classis Niagara may nominate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-clergy persons for Christian Reformed Home Missions • clergy persons for Faith Alive Christian Resources <p>Stated Clerk can direct councils or individuals to descriptions of boards, and expectations of board members.</p> <p>Councils are requested to submit names directly to the Stated Clerk in advance of the meeting; or to include names on their credential forms.</p>
13	August 9	From Ms. Dee Recker: that classes are encouraged to hear from regional representatives to denominational boards regularly	RFI

14	August 10	From Mr. John Bolt, Director of Finance and Administration, CRCNA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Ministers' Compensation Survey • 2012 Ministry Share Form and Booklet • Additional financial information and resources 	RFI; also sent to church treasurers, ministers, classis treasurers.
15	August 13	From CRC Communications: September ministries report of the Christian Reformed Church	RFI; forwarded to clerks of councils
16	August 11	From Jill Stark, Admin Assistant to Director of Candidacy and Director of Leadership Exchange, CRCNA: information about and invitation to a workshop planned by the denominational candidacy committee.	RFI; forwarded to CMLT
17	August 25	From Diaconal Ministries Canada, invitation to and schedule of workshops of Day of Encouragement, October 15	RFI; also sent to churches, diaconates are involved.

AGENDA ITEM 5.1: REPORT OF THE TREASURER: PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2012

Budget update for 2011 and 2012 Proposed

	2012 Prop Budget	2011 Budget	To Date Aug-11
<u>Classis Expense Fund:</u>			
<u>Members:</u>	<u>3,073</u>	<u>3,210</u>	
Shares	15,365	16,050	9,901
Interest Income	750	250	703
	<u>16,115</u>	<u>16,300</u>	<u>10,604</u>
Audit Fees	2,000	2,000	1,921
Delegates, Meals & Mileage	3,000	3,000	2,641
Charity Application	3,000	3,000	0
Liability Insurance	4,000	4,000	0
Minister's retreat	1,000	1,000	1,000
Office Expense	1,000	1,800	620
Safe Church Expense	1,000	1,000	0
Stated Clerk Remuneration	6,000	6,000	4,500
Treasurer Remuneration	6,000	6,000	4,500
	<u>27,000</u>	<u>27,800</u>	<u>15,182</u>
<u>Brock Campus Ministry:</u>			
Shares Received	85,858	81,965	40,002
Chaplain Salary	53,918	52,965	36,369
Travel Allowance	1,500	1,500	1,300
Housing	17,200	17,200	11,467
Pension Assessment	9,840	7,000	5,098
Medical Insurance	4,000	4,000	433
Wage Expenses	3,400	3,300	3,319
Professional Development	1,000	1,000	0
Ministry Expenses	3,000	3,000	0
	<u>93,858</u>	<u>89,965</u>	<u>57,986</u>
Note #4			

	2012 Prop Budget	2011 Budget	To Date Aug-11
<u>Shalom Manor Chaplain:</u>			
Classis Hamilton	37,970	33,686	17,033
Classis Niagara	33,210	27,927	28,117
Non CRC Churches	5,000	5,000	2,500
Shalom Church Services	21,231	20,991	12,606
	97,411	87,604	60,256

<u>Shalom Manor Chaplain:</u>			
Books and Conf Fees	2,500	2,500	1,667
Clergy Res. Allowance	16,800	16,800	11,200
Pulpit Supply	800	800	200
Chaplain Salary	57,571	55,404	36,936
Travel Allowance	2,000	2,000	
Wage Expenses	3,500	3,500	3,319
Health & Drug Plan	4,000	4,000	2,590
Pension Assessment	9,840	8,200	5,098
Misc.	400	400	0
	97,411	93,604	61,010

Classis Ministry Committee:

Shares	15,793	14,793	9,990
Coordinator Salary	9,373	9,373	6,249
Coordinator Expenses	1,200	1,200	0
Office Expenses	0	0	0
Conferences etc.	500	500	0
Website	400	400	108

Youth Leader Support Team:

Salary	1,978	1,978	989
Expenses	1,342	1,342	1,000
Youth Talks Subsidy	1,000	0	1,000
	15,793	14,793	9,346

Classis Ministry Leadership Team:

Shares	26,121	27,285	16,939
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The Village Church

Shares	18,438	19,260	13,222
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<u>Total Budget for Classis Niagara</u>	\$214,420	\$207,030	\$141,436
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Notes:	#1	Estimated fees for lawyer for Charity Application
	#2	Estimated fees for Liability Insurance
	#3	Built-in buffer for equipment repairs
Brock University Chaplaincy	#4	\$8,000 Deficit to decrease surplus

Classical Ministry Shares:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Members	3,073	<u>Budget</u>	3,210
<i>To be sent to Classical Treasurer:</i>			
Classis Expense Fund	5.00	15,365	5.00
Campus Ministry - Brock	27.94	85,858	26.61
Shalom Manor Chaplain	10.81	33,210	8.70
Classical Ministries Committee	5.14	15,793	4.80
Classis Ministry Leadership Team	8.50	26,121	8.50
The Village Church	6.00	18,438	6.00
	<u>63.39</u>	<u>194,785</u>	<u>59.61</u>

Membership	2012	Church	2011
	349	Beamsville - Providence	369
	270	Dunnville - Bethel	278
	210	Fenwick - Bethany	210
	517	Grimsby - Mountainview	512
	222	Stoney Creek - Fruitland	266
	92	Niag Falls - Rehoboth	99
	354	St. Cath - Covenant	389
	221	St. Cath - Jubilee Fellowship	228
	144	St. Cath - Maranatha	150
	96	St. Cath - Trinity	97
	314	Smithville	312
	156	Welland - Grace	181
	128	Wellandport - Riverside	119
	3,073	TOTALS	3,210

AGENDA ITEM 7: REPORT OF THE BROCK UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

Dear members of Classis Niagara,

One of the most gratifying aspects of my work as CRC Campus Minister – and believe me there are more than I can count! – is the way so many former students who were involved in this ministry while they were at Brock, are continuing to flourish in their spiritual life and are even playing a leadership role in their new faith communities after they have graduated. Some of these students, I should add, were at best lukeworm in their faith when they first came to Brock. Just this past week, one of them e.mailed me to suggest I read an article by Stanley Hauerwas on what it means to be a Christian student today. For the life of me, I cannot imagine this young man reading anything even remotely substantial in theology when he was still a student, let alone by Hauerwas who has sometimes been called America's greatest living theologian. But, over the years, I have observed him mature in his faith and grow in his respect for

the Reformed tradition (to which he did not belong originally). Both he and his young wife, so he informs me in his e.mail, are now actively involved as leaders in their church. Another former student who will soon be moving to BC with his wife, regularly stays in touch to keep me informed of the progress the two of them are making in their faith journey and of the challenges they are experiencing in finding a faith community similar to the one they were involved in at Brock. These are just two of the many stories that illustrate the lasting impact of this ministry on Brock students even long after they have graduated!

As part of my report, I would also briefly like to bring the following to your attention, not just for your information, but for the purpose of prayer as well:

1. Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association (CRCMA) annual conference, Halifax NS (May, 2011)

This year's annual CRCMA conference was hosted by the CRC Campus Ministry at Dalhousie. One of the primary aims was to involve as many campus ministry student leaders as possible. Three of my student leaders, Chris Arnold, Robin Lance, Chris Johnson and I made up Brock's contingent. It proved to be a great opportunity for the three students to meet with campus ministers and student leaders from the other universities where the CRC has an active ministry presence, to exchange ideas about current and future ministry projects with them, and to network. As a result, the three Brock students returned to St. Catharines even more enthusiastic about playing an active leadership role in the ministry in the new academic year.

2. Brock Campus Ministry Student Leadership Team

One of the permanent challenges facing any campus ministry is the impermanence of its leadership team, especially at a university like Brock with a relatively small postgraduate program. It is only at the end of their first year that it is possible to identify students with leadership potential. If they are doing a four year degree, they only have three years in which to commit that potential to the ministry. But very often the second year is taken up by leadership training. And if they are enrolled in a three year degree program, they have even less time to serve as leaders. However, the advantage of this continuous change in leadership is a constant inflow of fresh ideas and new initiatives into the ministry. As soon as the academic year begins, we will be launching an aggressive recruitment drive among the incoming first-year students, not only to further expand the ministry on campus, but also with the aim of trying to identify a new generation of possible student leaders for the ministry. The current team of student leaders will still be playing a key role in this initiative. They will also be encouraged to initiate faith based groups of their own, but in areas in which they feel most gifted. We are very optimistic that as a result of these initiatives and with the Lord's blessing the ministry can look forward to an even more amazing year!

3. Smart Start

For five days every week, from the middle of June to the second week of August, I represented all the ministries associated with Brock's Faith and Life Centre at the university's annual Smart Start program. The program is unique to Brock and is designed to give new first-year students and their parents the opportunity to get to know the campus and the various services available to students. At the end of the program, every new first year student at Brock would have received at least some information about our ministry and the CRC Campus Minister.

4. Everything-Under-the-Son website

Just before Smart Start, *Everything-Under-the-Son* which is the umbrella term for the numerous initiatives, projects, and programs associated with the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry at Brock, launched its very own website at www.everything-under-the-Son.ca (please check it out and let us know what you think!). It is hoped that this will further enhance the ministry's profile on campus and even beyond.

5. Connected Life at Brock

ConnectedLife at Brock is a program that was initiated last year by the CRC Campus Minister and his leadership team, mainly to promote a positive lifestyle among students and to provide guidance to students who are experiencing difficulty in their academic work and / or other areas of their personal life. Incidences of depression and suicide among students are on the increase throughout North America, to such an extent that universities and colleges cannot keep up with the increasing demand for on-campus counselling services. Last year, Brock even introduced a workshop on suicide prevention for select members of the non-academic staff, including the CRC Campus Minister. A number of senior students from a completely secular background have expressed interest in helping establish *ConnectedLife* on campus and throughout the summer I worked with one of them in developing the program and a website. We hope to have the website (www.connectedlifeatbrock.com) up and running before the beginning of the first term.

6. Connecting with students at Niagara College

One of the interesting ministry initiatives that came to our attention at the CRCMA Conference in Halifax was the extension of the CRC Campus Ministry at McMaster University in Hamilton to include the students of Mohawk College in its programs and activities. For some time now, a very small number of students from Niagara College have regularly participated in the ministry at Brock. We believe that we can duplicate McMaster's initiative by creating more opportunities for Niagara College students to be involved in the ministry at Brock and especially by developing ones tailored to their particular needs.

7. Combined outreach with the Village Church to Brock students in Thorold

During the summer, I met a number of times with Hilda Vanderklippe of the Village Church in Thorold and with another member, James Symons. While still a student at Brock, James played an active role in the CRC Campus Ministry. The aim of our meetings was to develop a strategy to connect with Brock students in Thorold. As a result of our discussions, we decided that during the first week of term, James and I will visit a number of houses in the area occupied by students to hand out free Kraft dinners and an invitation to attend an afternoon luncheon on Sunday, September 11, at Bill and Hilda's home in Thorold. In order to build meaningful relationships with these students, we are not over-ambitious in terms of the number of students we hope will attend. However, please remember this important initiative in your congregational prayers!

8. Cooperation with Jubilee CRC, Trinity CRC, and the Village Church

It's almost impossible to overemphasize how important it is for students to continue to experience even some kind of healthy family life when they are at Brock and far from home. For this reason, I have approached the three CRC congregations closest to Brock, i.e. Trinity CRC, Jubilee CRC, and the Village Church, very informally about the possibility of some of their members inviting small groups of students (two or three maximum) from time to time to their homes for a simple meal and conversation. All three congregations responded positively. I hope to be able to send a formal proposal outlining the practicalities of this initiative before the start of the first term at the very latest.

9. Cooperation with Brock Christian Fellowship (BCF) and Campus for Christ (C4C)

Traditionally, the CRC Campus Minister is the only member of the team of permanent Brock Chaplains who maintains close relations with the two Christian clubs on campus (BCF and C4C). Over the years, these relations have gone from strength to strength. Evidence of this is the fact that the CRC Campus Minister is always invited to their end-of-the-year banquets, events at which he is usually singled out for a warm and special thank-you for his support of the club's activities throughout the year. My relations with the previous as well as the current executive president of C4C have been particularly cordial with the result that can I look forward to an amazing year of collaboration on a whole variety of projects.

10. Toonie Suppers, Fall 2011

The 2010-2011 academic year saw the launch of our bi-weekly toonie suppers. For the toonie-suppers to succeed and attract students, we had to find a convenient locale, close to campus, and preferably one with a friendly and inviting atmosphere. None of the CRC churches in St. Catharines was close enough for this purpose. However, the Anglican Church of the Transfiguration on the corner of Glenridge and Glendale Avenues was eager to offer us the use of its facilities. Student attendance at each of the toonie suppers varied from between five and twenty. While by no means large, these numbers nevertheless provided ample opportunity for members of the various churches who prepared and served the food to meet the students. Even more gratifying is the fact that more than half of the students who came on a given Wednesday evening had very little connection with Christianity and even less so with a particular faith community. Since we were afraid we would be overrun by students and not have enough food to feed all of them, we limited ourselves so far mainly to word-of-mouth advertising. This year, we intend to advertise the event more widely and, as a matter of fact, I have it on good authority that every new first year student who came to Smart Start was told about it! By mutual agreement, Brock's Ecumenical Chaplaincy (Anglican, United, and Presbyterian) is responsible for the six toonie suppers of the second term (January to April), while the CRC Campus Ministry will host the six toonie suppers of the first term (September to November). We therefore urgently appeal to the CRC churches of Classis Niagara to help us in any way they can in this important outreach effort to students. All that is required is a meal that is cheap, very basic and easy to prepare for a maximum of between 15 to 20 students only six times every year.

11. Costa Rica and Namibia 2012

In 2012, a married couple from Jubilee, a very small group of students and I will be spending one week during Brock's annual reading week in February in Costa Rica to launch a new annual social justice program in that country for Brock students. There is already significant interest among students who would like to participate. A number of students have also asked me to lead a faith based social justice program in Namibia (Southern Africa) in April/May 2012. One of my student leaders, Chris Johnson, has volunteered to collaborate with Brock's International Student Services to plan and coordinate the program.

12. Preaching at Covenant, three weddings and a baptism, and member of the CRCMA executive

During the past summer, I preached at Covenant CRC, every Sunday morning from June 5 to August 21. During this time, I also led the worship service at three of the combined afternoon worship services at Maranatha CRC. Before the meeting of Classis in October, I will also have officiated at three weddings and a baptism, not to mention preaching once at Grace CRC (Welland). On a side note, I would like to report that I am currently also in the second year of my three year term as binational secretary-treasurer of the CRCMA.

13. Teaching, research, and member of the CRCMA executive

Once again, I have been asked to teach courses in Brock's Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program. In the Fall and Winter Terms, I will be teaching MARS 1F90, a first year course I developed from scratch and have taught since its inception at Brock. In the Winter Term, I will also be responsible for teaching MARS 4P82 (Renaissance to Modernity), a fourth year seminar course. Minor teaching responsibilities in the 2011/12 academic year also include one lecture only on respectively Augustine's *Confessions* and *Women Writers of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. A few months ago, a colleague in the Modern Languages and Literatures Dept. at Brock approached me about doing a translation from Latin into English of a letter written in 1583 by a number of indigenous Roman Catholic priests in Peru to Pope Gregory XIII complaining about the discrimination they were suffering at the hands of their Spanish colleagues. My translation and his accompanying article are about to be submitted for publication. The past summer has also allowed me some time to return to my own research, but I don't anticipate turning it into book sometime soon, although Oxford University Press has already shown interest in publishing it.

14. Home Missions Evaluation of Brock CRC Campus Ministry

Last year, Mark Wallace, the new Home Missions Educational Ministries Director was invited to visit Brock. During his visit he met with student leaders (in the absence of the campus minister) in order to formulate his first impression of the ministry. I believe it is time for a formal Home Missions Evaluation of the ministry and have invited Mark to return to Brock for this purpose. I hope to be able to give delegates to Classis a definite date as soon as one has been finalized with Mark.

As always, my students and I cannot thank the churches of Classis Niagara enough for their generous support of this ministry and request that you continue to pray for God's work through this ministry on the Brock campus.

In Christ,

Dr. André F. Basson
Brock CRC Campus Minister

AGENDA ITEM 8: REPORT OF THE SHALOM MANOR CHAPLAIN

It had never happened before. This does not preclude that it cannot happen. It was close to 10 o'clock, time for worship to begin. The person on duty from the Recreation department told me that we did not have a music accompanist. The person scheduled to lead us in worship had not shown up. It was two minutes before 10.

I surveyed the people around me and asked a few of them if they were willing to lead in singing – a spontaneous praise time. I told them that I will first ask if there is someone from among the worshippers who is able and willing to lead us in worship. (There were a significant amount of guests worshipping with us that morning.) If no one volunteered, we would sing the songs a cappella, lead by our just-then-formed praise team.

After praying in my office with the serving office bearers, after walking with the serving elder to the front and shaking hands, I stood before the worshipping community and asked for a volunteer to play. Reluctantly, someone raised their hand. Not seeing, I was made aware of her raised hand. It was the hand of an eighteen, nineteen, maybe twenty-one year old. When she came to the front, I asked what her name was, where she was from. She was from Thunderbay, visiting her grandmother. It was her first time at Shalom Manor & Gardens. Volunteering to play took a bit of courage.

After playing the first few notes of the opening song, everyone worshipping with us that morning knew that we had received a gifted musician. Her fingers danced over the keys with a rhythm, volume and speed that drew even mediocre singers like myself to sing along! During the offering, it was clear that she knew the old favourites. As she played hymns that had accompanied the worshippers through the vineyards and deserts of their lives, many worshippers hummed along and those who knew the words sang along. If you have heard this, you know that this is an inspirational moment of worship at Shalom Manor & Gardens.

She was totally unfamiliar with the Dutch song in our liturgy. This came as no surprise. In all likelihood, the Dutch song we were going to sing was penned many generations before she was born. I asked for volunteer leaders to lead us in singing. Five worshippers came forward; three were regular volunteers, one, who was from out of town, was family of a resident and one, who was visiting from Holland, was a daughter of a resident. Because we were singing a cappella, everyone sang a little louder!

It was a wonderful worship service. The residents were thrilled that a young woman would play for them; a young woman who could play so well, a young woman who knew their favourites, who had never been at Shalom before! After the worship service, someone said to me, “It’s amazing. God is great. God cares so much that God even watches over this worshipping community of elderly people and provides them with a gifted and skilled musician!” And it is true. God watches over the residents, the ministry that takes place here and over the institution.

Let me provide just one example. September 2010, Shalom Manor & Gardens was without a CEO. Shortly thereafter, we were without a Director of Care. These are the two most influential positions in the managerial structure of Shalom Manor & Gardens. Today we have a new CEO. Her name is Konnie Peets. We have a new Director of Care. Her name is Patricia Chadwick. Both are sincere Christians, both are very competent; both are people who I believe will be a blessing for our residents, for their families and for the care providers who work at Shalom Manor & Gardens. It is true, God is great! God cares for our residents and God care for – Shalom Manor & Gardens!

Submitted by Rev. Fred VanderBerg

AGENDA ITEM 11: OVERTURE FROM TRINITY CRC, ST. CATHARINES

Overture from Trinity CRC, St Catharines

Background:

At its regular meeting, on February 16, 2011, Classis Niagara elected officials to be delegates to Synod 2011. At this meeting it was decided that Rev. Jim Dekker (Covenant), Rev. Steven deBoer (Providence, *rotation*), Elder Jack deVries (Covenant), and Elder Bert Witvoet (Jubilee Fellowship) would represent Classis Niagara at Synod (*Classis Niagara Minutes of Meeting; February 16, 2011 – Item 10, Page 2 of 4*).

We, the Council of Trinity CRC, suggest a more comprehensive representation of the plurality of churches in Classis Niagara would be achieved by limiting the number of delegates to Synod by each church to one – either a pastor or an elder.

Overture:

Regarding the election of office-bearers to Synod, the council of Trinity CRC requests that Classis Niagara elect each delegate from different member churches within the Classis.

Grounds:

1. Classis Niagara consists of 13 churches comprising a total of 139 Elders and 14 Ordained Ministers, as a result a diversity of opinions, social settings, and theological opinions are present within Classis Niagara. In order to have the needs, issues and diversity of viewpoints adequately represented at our annual Synod we should have representatives from as many churches as possible.
 - a. Article 45 of the CRCNA Church Order (2010) defines Synod as “the assembly representing the *churches* of all the classes.” (Emphasis added). To have half (or more) of the representatives from only *one* church does not fairly represent the plurality of churches in our Classis.
 - b. Article 85 of the CRCNA Church Order (2010) states: “No church shall in any way lord it over another church, and no office-bearer shall lord it over another office-bearer.” In order to prevent the plethora of voices within our Classis from being mitigated, electing delegates from as many churches possible is necessary.

Clerk of council Trinity CRC St. Catharines: J. Schouwenaar
Chairman: W. Bootsma

AGENDA ITEM 12.2: REPORT FROM REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



Greetings from Redeemer University College! We trust that you have been refreshed and blessed by God during the summer. Redeemer has had a very active summer filled with Continuing Education sessions, workshops and other scholarly projects, Summer Rays camp, many other guests and conferences, and construction projects across the campus. We're looking forward to the arrival of our students in September, and we pray that the Lord will bless our preparation for an exciting 2011-12 academic year.

We are again expecting strong enrolment for Fall 2011. Although our new student application numbers are slightly down from last year's high numbers, we still expect to exceed last year's enrolment of 915 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. The increased use of our website, media contact and, especially social media vehicles such as Twitter and Facebook, has enabled us to get our message out to a wider and more diverse audience.

We are blessed to have several new faculty-members join Redeemer for the coming year, including Dr. Laura Luchies in Psychology, Dr. Jonathan Juilfs in English, Mr. Philip Teeuwesen in Education (beginning January 2012), Dr. Allan Curnew in French (sessional) and Mr. Ben Dunson (a two-year sessional) in Religion and Theology. Dr. Terry Loerts in Education and Mr. James Tughan in Art are temporary replacements in short-staffed departments. Dr. Steve Sider, who was granted a leave of absence for the current academic year, has resigned and has taken up a tenure stream position in another university. We have also hired new administrative staff in some departments. We are deeply grateful that God continues to prepare and call outstanding and committed faculty to Redeemer and its mission of Christian university education in Canada.

We trust that God also will continue to provide new administrative leaders for Redeemer. This year, two long-serving Vice Presidents, Ineke Van Bruinessen (Administration and Finance) and Bill van Staalduinen (Advancement) will retire. Plans are under way to celebrate their work and to recruit a new Vice President, Administration and Finance and Vice President, Advancement during the coming academic year.

Our KIP and RInC projects are progressing well, though somewhat slowed due to the process of the City and Hamilton Conservation Authority approvals, but remain on target to be completed by the end of this summer. The solar PV project design is complete, and installation of the system will proceed with an anticipated fall start-up. This will help reduce Redeemer's greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint, and increase the institution's sustainability.

Through the collaborative effort of our Academic, Advancement, and Student Development divisions, we have received three breakthrough grants: from the "Stronger Together" foundation consortium we have received funding to support a one-year partnership between Crossroads Media and Redeemer's Theatre Department to produce performances of portions of the gospel for possible television broadcasting, and funding to partner with Hamilton's Jobs Prosperity Collaborative to allow us to hire a half-time coordinator of service learning for one year to coordinate our student volunteer and service-learning in downtown Hamilton in collaboration with other social agencies. We also received a "Students for Development" award, funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to enable us to fund student internships in Ghana during the next four years.

Plans for the fall 2011 CLEAR program are well underway and the program is being refined and focussed based on an assessment of the past successes and current levels of interest. Redeemer's

Fourth Annual Worship Conference will take place on Saturday September 24. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Robbie F. Castleman, Associate Professor of Theology at John Brown University. Dr. Castleman will be speaking on "Incarnational Liturgy: Burning Bushes, Bare Feet, Holy Ground."

A free Faculty Artists Concert is planned on Friday, September 30 at 8:00 pm in the Auditorium, in conjunction with Redeemer's Annual General Membership meeting, starting with a reception at 5:00 pm, followed by the AGM and dinner at 5:30 pm.

We are thankful to report that the operating budget donations goal for the fiscal year was surpassed by approximately \$13,000, including a record amount from churches of \$850,000. These are amazing blessings. These gifts are essential for our student financial aid program and to make a Christian university education accessible to more students.

We praise God for the many ways that He has blessed us with strong enrolment, gifted and committed faculty and staff, and dedicated and generous donors. We have indeed seen God at work throughout the past academic year, and look forward to the next academic year in the confidence of God's provision and leading.

Dr Hubert R. Krygsman, President