



## CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, May 26, 2010

Host Church: Maranatha CRC, St. Catharines



**Officers:** Chairman: Rev. Duane VanderLaan; Vice-Chairman: Rev. Richard Loerop; Stated Clerk: John TeBrake

**Delegates,** as per Classical Credentials and report of the host church:

Providence, Beamsville	Rev. Steven DeBoer	Elder Ron Kielstra
Bethel, Dunnville	Rev. John Heidinga	Elder Ed Hoekstra
Bethany, Fenwick	Rev. E.J. deWaard	The Elder delegate was absent
Fruitland	Elder Fred Hoogendoorn	Elder Mike Hamilton
Mountainview, Grimsby	Pastor Rick Roeda	Elder Bill VandenBrink
Rehoboth, Niagara Falls	Rev. Rudy Ouwehand	Elder Rick Meloen
Covenant, St. Catharines	Elder Ralph Numan	Elder Ineke Bezuyen
Village Church, Thorold	Pastor Mike Collins	
Jubilee Fellowship, St. Catharines	Rev. Duane VanderLaan	Elder Ruth Jongejan
Maranatha, St. Catharines	Rev. Richard Loerop	Elder Hans Branderhorst
Trinity, St. Catharines	Elder Alex Krikke	Elder Ron Mulder
Smithville	Rev. Greg Fluit	Elder Adrian VanderWier
Grace, Welland	Rev. Ryan Braam	Elder Kevin DeRoo
Riverside, Wellandport	Rev. Derek Bouma	Elder Dave VanderWier

- Opening Devotions:** The Chairman of this meeting, Rev. Duane VanderLaan, welcomed the delegates and visitors and invited Rev. Richard Loerop of the host church to lead in opening devotions. Rev. Loerop reminded delegates of the great task we have as the church of Jesus Christ, and that while this may be the “ordinary” part of the church year in the lectionary, our work is in fact “extra-ordinary”.
- Constitution of Classis:** Elder Hans Branderhorst, on behalf of the host church, read the roll call. All churches were represented. First-time delegates had signed the form of subscription and the Chairman declared classis constituted. Classis took note that there was only a minister delegate from Bethany.
- Voting for Region 4 Delegate to Calvin College BOT:** Classis voted for its choice for delegate to the Calvin College BOT from the ballot provided by the CRCNA; results were forwarded by the Stated Clerk to the denominational office to be added to those of the other three classes in this region.
- Discussion re Stewardship:** in answer to several recent responses to CO Article 41 questions, Pastor Frank Engelage facilitated a discussion on stewardship. In small discussion groups, by church visitor team, delegates were invited to share their understanding of stewardship; best practices; challenges; joys; and other observations about stewardship.
- Reports of the Executive Committee and Stated Clerk:** The Stated Clerk, John TeBrake, led delegates through the reports of the Executive Committee, as printed in the agenda and supplementary materials. Classis approved the recommendation of the EC that coverage for health insurance of the Brock University Chaplain should be reinstated as provided for in the budget of 2010. Mr. TeBrake then reviewed the reports of correspondence. Classis approved the reports of the Executive Committee and the work of the Stated Clerk.
- Report of the Classical Ministry Leadership Team:** The chairman of the CMLT led delegates through its report in the supplementary portion of the agenda. The CMLT’s request to fund the following students as indicated was approved by Classis:

Roelof Peereboom* Tuition plus books	\$ 12 408 + 750 (US Funds)
Joseph Hamilton	\$ 12 408 + 750 (US Funds)
Steve Eckersley (EPMC Semester)	\$ 6 204 + 375 (US Funds)
Wes Collins	\$ 2076 + 375 (Can. Funds)

The CMLT also asked Classis to approve a Ministry Share amount of \$8.50 for the year 2011 (it had been much less because of a significant surplus, which has now been reduced). Classis approved this request.

**7. Church Counselor Reports:**

- Rev. David Tigchelaar reported that the Fruitland CRC is working on extending a call, and commended the council of that church for its work during its vacancy. Student Wes Collins is contracted to minister there for the summer.
- Rev. Steven deBoer reported that the Trinity CRC is continuing in its search for a pastor, having been without for a year and a half. That church is now considering to extend a call to a 2010 Ministry Candidate
- Rev. Greg Fluit reported that the Mountainview CRC is continuing in its search for a senior pastor.

**8. Regional Pastors' Report:** Rev. David Tigchelaar informed delegates that he had been much involved in one of our churches with respect to an issue. Both he and Rev. Rudy Ouwehand reminded delegates that they are available for both pastors and councils to call upon if there is a need.

**9. Classical Nominating Committee Report:** Mr. Cor VanSoelen, chairman of the committee, referred delegates to its report in the agenda. Classis approved the following appointments:

- Mr. Bill Van de Brink (Mountainview) and Ms. Ann Kiers (Bethany) to replace Mr. Mel Elzinga and Ms. Sylvia DeVries on the Nominating Committee
  - Rev. Steven deBoer (Providence) to replace Rev. Jim Dekker on the Classical Ministries Executive Committee
- Mr. VanSoelen requested that councils offer suggestions for names of lay people who might be appointed to replace Rev. deBoer on the CMLT. (Classis approved in February to adjust the mix of lay and clergy members of this committee)

**10. Safe Church Team Report:** Minister member Rev. Ryan Braam informed delegates that not all churches have representation of the Safe Church Team of Classis Niagara; and about changes in obtaining police clearance certificates for volunteers and workers. He pointed out the benefit of each church or church council having a presentation from the Church Safe Team about the need for churches to have their own Safe Church Teams. Classis approved a recommendation from the Safe Church Team to allow the team to have "associates" so that well-trained individuals whose terms on the team have ended can remain available to serve on any advisory panels.

**11. Classical Ministries Committee Report:** Pastor Frank Engelage, Classical Ministries Coordinator, summarized the work of this committee as including youth, the classis web-site, the Brock and Shalom Chaplaincies, the Village Church/Home Missions. He invited various individuals from these ministries to report:

- Pastor Mike Collins of the Village Church spoke about its recent formal opening and its growth of activities; he appreciates the financial and prayer support of Classis Niagara;
- Ms. Hilda VanderKlippe gave a presentation about the Eastern Canada Leadership Development Network, and urged councils to assist potential leaders in the direction of this training opportunity;
- Mr. Ron Mulder updated the delegates on the progress of the Niagara Network (for youth); most churches are now represented;
- Rev. Greg Fluit noted that the Brock Chaplaincy has benefited from a recent internal evaluation of the ministry, which resulted in many expressions of appreciation, and also some critiques which have led to changes to improve;
- Rev. Fred VanderBerg presented a report on behalf of his chaplaincy ministry at Shalom Manor.

Classis approved the work of the Classical Ministries Coordinator.

**12. Calvin Theological Seminary Report:** Region 4 delegate to the Board of Trustees of CTS, Rev. Jim Poelman, brought greetings from CTS. He informed delegates that the seminary had changed from three semesters per year to two; that finances continues to be a challenge; that President Neal Plantinga would step down in May 2011 and that a replacement would be presented for approval by Synod 2010; and that enrolment numbers are encouraging for the fall of 2010.

**13. Church Visitor Report:** Rev. Rudy Ouwehand presented a report on the church visit he and Dr. André Basson had made with the Bethel CRC recently. There were no other church visit reports, and the Bethel report was received for information.

**14. Executive Session:** The chairman declared an executive session of classis, and those who were not office bearers of the CRCNA were excused. Separate minutes of the executive session are held by the Stated Clerk.

**15. Return to Regular Session:** Classis returned to regular session.

- 16. Credentials Committee Report:** Elder Alex Krikke of the Trinity CRC reported that the Mountainview CRC had included a question under Church Order Article 41 (re process of finding a pastor); and the Grace CRC had included comments with respect to how membership is to be counted. Both items were referred to the Executive Committee of Classis.
- 17. Adjournment:** Rev. Richard Loerop led in closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned, and was followed by dinner, which in turn was followed by a presentation and a discussion led by Dr. Peter Borgdorff on the Belhar Confession and why the Interchurch Relations Committee of the CRCNA is recommending its adoption as a fourth confession for the CRC.
- 18. Next meeting:**  
*Date:* October 20, 2010  
*Agenda Deadline:* September 1, 2010  
*Location:* **Shalom Manor** (Rehoboth will be convening church, as the calling church of Rev. Fred VanderBerg)  
*Chairman:* Rev. Richard Loerop  
*Vice-chairman:* Rev. Greg Fluit  
*Credentials:* Jubilee (to chair) and Trinity  
*Overture Advisory:* Bethany (to chair) and Fruitland
- Following meetings:* February 16, 2011 (Mountainview CRC); May 18, 2011 (Grace CRC); Oct.19, 2011