

PRESS RELEASE: CLASSIS NIAGARA, June 18, 2008

On behalf of the convening church of Smithville Rev Souman called the meeting to order and read from Galatians 5:1-6:10. He requested the brothers and those present as visitors to sing from Psalm 66:1, 4. Rev Souman asked the Lord in prayer for a blessing upon the meeting. He welcomed the brothers, including br. Rolf Den Hollander, who was present for a preparatory examination to be declared eligible for call. Rev Bouwers was welcomed as a fraternal delegate from the URCNA. Rev Wynia was also present, having accepted the call of the church in Lincoln. The church in Smithville reported that all the delegates were present. Several of the churches included instructions with the credentials. The church in Bluebell sent only one delegate. Rev Souman was chairman, Rev de Boer vice chair and Rev Kok clerk. Rev Souman as chairman now remembered with the assembly that the churches in Attercliffe and Lincoln were blessed with ministers of the Word willing to take up the work in their midst. The church of Smithville was remembered with the departure of Rev Souman to Willoughby Heights and the call to Rev Bouwers of the URCNA of Jordan, Ontario. Dr Gootjes of the Theological College in Hamilton was remembered with the difficulties in his health.

Br. Den Hollander submitted the required documentation for his examination. The necessary documents were present. Br. Den Hollander presented his sermon on Galatians 6:1-5. Classis met in closed session to discuss the sermon proposal and the report of examiners who assigned the brother his text. The sermon was judged to be satisfactory and sufficient to proceed with the examination. Br. Den Hollander re-entered the meeting, the meeting was declared to be in open session and, after a break, Rev VanDam continued by examining the brother in OT exegesis, focusing on the text of Hosea 2:14-23. Rev Souman then examined br. Den Hollander in NT exegesis, focusing on Acts 17:16-34. Rev Kok examined the brother in Doctrine and Creeds. Opportunity was given for the members of Classis to ask questions of the brother. Classis re-entered closed session to discuss the examinations and decided to declare br Rolf den Hollander eligible for call after the brother promised not to teach or preach anything that is not in accordance with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. Those present sang from Psalm 134:1, 2, 3, and Rev Kok gave thanks in prayer.

After lunch, Rev Souman re-opened the meeting and br.A. Schutten led in devotions from Psalm 134. The brothers sang from Psalm 133:1, 2, and br. Schutten led in prayer. Rev Bouwers of the URCNA was given the floor to speak words of greeting on behalf of Classis Ontario of the URCNA. Rev Bouwers encouraged the churches with the words of Ephesians 2:11ff and expressed hope that the two federations might continue to grow together. Rev Souman responded with words of appreciation.

Rev Souman asked the churches the questions in article 44 C.O. All the churches answered that the ministry of the offices is being continued and that the decisions of the major assemblies are being maintained. The church of Attercliffe presented the necessary documents for the approval of the call extended to Rev Huijgen and the call was approved. Installation of Rev Huijgen will take place on July 13, 2008, D.V. Classis appointed the church of

Dunnville/Wainfleet to represent the churches of Classis at this occasion.

The church in Lincoln requested a Classis in August 2008 for the colloquium with Rev Wynia. It was decided that the church of Spring Creek would convene the next Classis on August 13, 2008. Advice was given concerning the colloquium.

The church in Smithville requested that Rev Souman be released from his duties in Classis Niagara. The necessary documents were presented and Rev Souman was honourably released. Rev de Boer expressed thankfulness for the work that Rev Souman was able to do, and Rev Souman responded with the wish that the Lord may continue to bless the churches in Classis Niagara. The neighbouring church of Grassie was appointed to represent the churches of Classis at the farewell service for Rev Souman. The church of Smithville requested that Rev VanDam be appointed councilor for Smithville. Classis agreed with this request.

In closed session the church of Spring Creek asked for advice. Advice was given.

A proposal from the church of Smithville was discussed regarding the regulations of General Synod. Classis adopted the proposal of the church of Smithville and will propose to Regional Synod that the regulations of General Synod require all material reports to be discussed by the churches be submitted to the churches no later than six months prior to the convocation of General Synod.

In closed session the reports of the church visitors were read. The chairman expressed thankfulness for the reports and for the work of the Lord which continues in the churches. The suggested officers for the next classis are Rev VanDam chairman, Rev Kok clerk, and Rev de Boer vice chair. Spring Creek was requested to invite fraternal delegates to the next Classis. Rev Kok was appointed as a depute for examination to replace Rev Souman.

Opportunity was given for questions and the chairman concluded that there was no need for censure ad Article 34 C.O. After the adoption of the Acts and the approval of the press release, Rev de Boer asked the brothers to sing from Psalm 47:1, 3 and led in prayer. The chairman thanked the brothers and declared Classis closed.

Dave de Boer
Clerk at the time