

Press Release of Regional Synod East, November 8th and December 7th, 2006, held at *Rehoboth* Church, Burlington, Ontario.

November 8th, 2006—First Session

The Regional Synod had been convened by Burlington-Waterdown Church. On behalf of the church, the Rev. J. Huijgen called the meeting to order. He asked the brothers to sing Psalm 86:3 & 4, read Psalm 86 and, after speaking a few fitting words, led in prayer. Examination of the credentials showed that all four Ontario classes were appropriately represented. Rev. Huijgen wished the brothers well.

By election, Rev. D.G.J. Agema was chosen to serve as chairman, Rev. G.Ph. van Popta as vice-chairman, and Rev. M. Jagt as clerk. The *moderamen* were seated and then took a few moments to organize the agenda items.

On the agenda were several appeals by churches or members against various classical decisions, several overtures from classes, and a number of reports. Two rounds were given on each main agenda item to gauge the mood of the brothers on the various issues. Four advisory committees were struck organized according to the delegates of the four classes represented. The agenda points were divided among the four committees in such a way that the brothers of each committee had never dealt at a classis level with the specific issues they were assigned. In this way the committees could take a fresh look at the issues.

By late morning the committees had their advices prepared so that synod could, again, meet in plenary session. Over the course of the day, several appeals were discussed and answered. Synod sincerely hoped and prayed the answers will be accepted and foster peace in the minds of the appellants and in the midst of the churches.

Bethel Church of Toronto asked Synod for advice. *Bethel* Church is our representative church for contact with the Provincial government to facilitate our ministers being recognized as authorized to perform marriages. The man whom they had appointed to be their contact with the government is now a member of a United Reformed Church. *Bethel* Church asked Synod for advice on this. Synod adopted the following advice:

1. *Bethel* Church asks Regional Synod for advice in the matter of br. C. Lindhout, now a member of a United Reformed Church, acting as liason with the office of the Registrar General for the Province of Ontario for the purpose of enabling our ministers to solemnize marriages.
2. Regional Synod notes that Regional Synod 1989 did not appoint specific individuals, but appointed *Bethel* Church to be the representative church for the Canadian Reformed Churches in Ontario.
3. Regional Synod advises *Bethel* Church that it does not find the *status quo* unacceptable. When br. Lindhout signs the letters he does as authorized by *Bethel*

Church. However, *Bethel* Church has the freedom to appoint someone else if it deems that advisable.

Regional Synod had received several overtures from various classes. However, unfortunately, the churches of the Regional Synod had not received the overtures in time to give them due consideration and provide comment to Regional Synod. To, as yet, give the churches time, Synod decided that it would adjourn until December 7th. The clerk was instructed to notify the churches immediately of this decision.

As well, due to an oversight, the churches had not received a timely request to submit names of elders who could be delegated to General Synod Smithers, 2007. Regional Synod decided to leave the matter of the delegation to General Synod until the December 7th session. The clerk was instructed to notify the churches immediately of this decision and to ask the consistories to submit names of elders who would be available to be delegated to General Synod and to inform the clerk of Regional Synod of such names before December 7th.

Several reports were received:

1. Brampton Church reported that inspection of the Regional Synod archives revealed they are in good order.
2. The several Deputies *ad* Church Order Article 48 reported that they had not been called upon for advice.
3. *Covenant* Church at Grassie reported that the treasurer's books were audited and found to be in good order.
4. The Regional Synod treasurer, Brother D. Van Amerongen, submitted a report and proposed that the churches be assessed \$1.00 per communicant member. This proposal was adopted.

The Acts of the day were read and adopted. After an appropriate closing, the chairman adjourned Regional Synod until December 7th, 2006.

December 7th, 2006—Second Session

On December 7th, Regional Synod was reconvened. The chairman, the Rev. D.G.J. Agema, called the meeting to order. He read Psalm 132 and spoke some words about the Psalm in light of the time of year. We sang stanzas 8, 9 and 10 of that Psalm. Roll call showed that all the delegates were present except the Rev. J.G. Slaa who had phoned to say that he was prevented from driving to Burlington because of inclement weather.

The clerk, the Rev. M. Jagt, reported on the mail that had come in. As stated above, because the churches had not received in time the overtures nor a request to submit names of elders available to be delegated to General Synod, the clerk of Regional Synod had invited the churches to comment on the overtures and submit names. It was noted that Regional Synod would only deal with letters from the churches interacting with these matters.

A few rounds of discussion were held on the overture of Classis Ontario West to have Regional Synod East ask General Synod to add to the *Book of Praise* a form for the installation of ministers set apart for the training to the ministry. As well a few rounds of discussion were held on the overtures of Classis Ontario West and Classis Central Ontario related to Church Order Article 63 (Marriage). Committees were struck to prepare advices for consideration by Regional Synod.

After lunch, the advisory committee re: overture for a new liturgical form presented its proposal. Regional Synod decided not to endorse the overture of Classis Ontario West to ask General Synod to include in the *Book of Praise* a liturgical form for the ordination or installation of ministers set apart for training to the ministry.

The second advisory committee, dealing with a proposal to amend Article 63 of the Church, presented its proposal. After discussion, Regional Synod decided to overture General Synod to change Article 63 of the Church Order as follows (changes italicized):

The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman. The consistory shall ensure that the members of the congregation marry only in the Lord, and that the ministers – as authorized by the consistory – solemnize only such marriages as are in accordance with the Word of God.

The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or in a public worship service. The adopted Form for the Solemnization of Marriage shall be used.

Under appointments, the following were made:

- Deputies *ad* Article 48 were appointed.
- Treasurer: Br. D. van Amerongen, 342 Russ Road, RR 1, Grimsby ON L3M 4E7.
- Church to audit the books of the treasurer: *Covenant Church of Grassie.*
- Archives: *Bethel Church of Toronto.*
- Inspection of archives: Brampton Church.
- Delegation to General Synod:
 - Ministers: D.G.J. Agema, P.G. Feenstra, G. Nederveen, A. Souman, C.J. Vandervelde, J. Vanwoudenberg.
 - Alternate ministers, in the following order: E. Kampen, R.E. Pot, J. de Gelder, M.H. Van Luik, W. Den Hollander, J.E. Ludwig.
 - Elders: H. De Vries, J.G. Heyink, C.J. Nobels, G.J. Nordeman, E. Pol, F. Westrik.
 - Alternate elders, in the following order: F. Stoffels, J. Bouwman, L. Lodder, F.C. Ludwig, A. Hordyk, G. Bos.
- Nomination to Board of Governors:
 - G.Ph. van Popta
 - Alternates: C.J. Vandervelde, E. Kampen, D.G.J. Agema.

- To convene the next Regional Synod East: *Maranatha* Church in Fergus on November 14th, 2007.

The chairman concluded that censure was not needed. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved. Psalm 105:1,2 was sung after which the chairman closed the meeting with prayer and thanksgiving.

G.Ph. van Popta
Vice-Chairman, *e.t.*