

Press Release Classis Pacific West October 8, 2013 held in Surrey, BC

Classis was opened by br. John VanderStoep on behalf of the convening church, Surrey-Maranatha. He led the gathering in devotions and welcomed some special guests. Rev. Joe Poppe and Rev. Bill Wielenga were in attendance as deputies for Regional Synod in relation to the peremptory examination that was on the agenda. He also welcomed Rev. Paul Johnson of the North-West Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church who was attending as a fraternal delegate. Also acknowledged were Candidate Ben Schoof, who had accepted the call of Surrey-Maranatha, here for the peremptory examination, and his father who had come from Australia to witness it. Significant events amongst the churches that have taken place since the last Classis were also remembered.

The credentials were examined by the convening church of the previous classis, the church of Smithers. All churches were represented by their primi delegates. The following brothers were appointed as moderamen: Rev. Carl VanDam as chairman, Rev. James Slaa as vice-chairman, and Rev. Ryan DeJonge as clerk. After Classis was constituted, the agenda was finalized. Rev. Paul Johnson of the OPC was invited to come forward and sit at the table as a fraternal delegate.

The first item was the peremptory examination of br. Ben Schoof, minister-elect of the Maranatha congregation. Rev. Joe Poppe and Rev. Bill Wielenga were invited to participate. The necessary documents per Church Order and regulations of Classis were submitted by br. Schoof, so that Classis could decide to proceed with the examination. Br. Schoof delivered a sermon on Matthew 9:1-8. After discussion, Classis deemed the sermon sufficient to continue with the examination, and the deputies of Regional Synod concurred. Classis then proceeded to examine br. Schoof on the following topics: Exegesis Old Testament (1 Samuel 8 and Psalm 137), Exegesis New Testament (Matthew 4 and James 5), and Knowledge of Scripture. Classis then adjourned for lunch.

Following lunch, Rev. Paul Johnson of the OPC addressed classis. He expressed joy at being able to attend classis, for the brotherhood and fellowship we can enjoy, and for the unity that we share. He brought news of important events and happenings in the Presbytery as well as the OPC federation as a whole. Rev. Theo Lodder responded on behalf of Classis with words of thankfulness for his attendance, and expressed that it truly was a blessing to have Rev. Johnson in our midst.

The examination of br. Schoof resumed, at which time following topics were covered: Doctrine and Creeds, Church History, Ethics, Church Polity and Diaconiology. When the examination was completed (at 3:15 pm!) Classis went into closed session to discuss it. With thankfulness, Classis decided that br. Schoof sustained the examination, and the deputies of Regional Synod concurred. Therefore the way was opened for br. Schoof to be ordained as minister of the Word in Maranatha-Surrey CanRC. The call was approbated. The Surrey church informed Classis that ordination is set for October 27, 2013 in the morning service. Rev. Theo Lodder was appointed to represent Classis at the welcome evening later that day.

Classis granted honourable release to Rev. T. VanRaalte with respect to his duties at Classis, as requested by Surrey-Maranatha CanRC. Rev. VanRaalte, who has accepted the appointment as professor of Ecclesiology at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, keeps his ministerial credentials with Surrey.

Reports were read of church visits made to the churches of Langley, Willoughby Heights, Prince George Mission Congregation, Houston, Smithers and Cloverdale. They were received with much thankfulness, as they testify of the Lord's work in the midst of His churches.

Rev. Theo Lodder gave a report on a visit he made to a gathering of the North-West Presbytery of the OPC (September 24-26). Part of that visit involved a day-long pre-presbytery conference on the doctrine of Republication of the Covenant of Works. Unfortunately, Rev. Lodder had to return home early, before the regular Presbytery meeting, due to the passing away of Rev. W.W.J. VanOene.

One church sought the advice of Classis on a matter of discipline. Another church asked for advice on the matter of renting the church building to other "religious" groups. Advice was given.

The churches also apprised Classis on the mission activities in their various congregations.

The convening church of the next classis is Willoughby Heights, on December 10, 2013, with alternate date, April 8, 2014, in the Willoughby Heights church building. Suggested officers are chairman: Rev. Ryan DeJonge; vice-chairman, Rev. Theo Lodder; clerk: Rev. James Slaa

Due to Rev. Ted VanRaalte's departure, as well as the retirement of some elders from office, some appointments had to be made to various committees of Classis, even though this normally takes place at the April Classis. The following appointments were made:

Appeals Committee: Rev. Anthon Souman (convenor), br. Len Stam, br. Albert VanderHeide; Alternates: Rev. Ryan DeJonge, br. Pete Schouten, Rev. James Slaa.

Church Visitors: Revs. Lodder, Slaa (convenor), Souman, and VanDam.

Deputy for Co-ordinating Ecclesiastical Contact: Rev. Theo Lodder.

Opportunity was given for personal question period. The chairman deemed that censure according to Article 34 C.O. was not necessary. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved. The chairman led in closing devotions, in which thanksgiving was given to God for all his blessings and supplications were offered for various needs.

For classis, at that time, Rev. James Slaa