

ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA

CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Feb 24, 2015

New Starting Time: 1:00 PM

Below, please find the final reports for the upcoming Classis meeting. by mutual request of both Faith CRC and Rev. Peter Janssens, Classis will be asked to approve an article 17 separation request. Hope CRC, Brantford and Meadowlands Fellowship, Ancaster, have been appointed to review this request and guide Classis in its deliberations. The Classis will go into Executive Session for that discussion at which time the delegates will be apprised of the details leading up to this turn of events.

The Synodical Deputies for the meeting will be Rev. Hendrick Bruinsma (Classis Toronto), Rev. James Dekker (Classis Niagara) and Rev. Jack Kerkhof (Classis Chatham).

Please come prepared with a list of names for Elder Delegates to Synod 2015. No nominations were received via the credentials process.

The 2nd item in the Overtures report (Jarvis, Ebenezer CRC Overture) is marked "DRAFT". A few points are still being worked on. The committee will invite the response of Jarvis to ensure that that communication has occurred before the final submission which will be handed out at the Classis meeting.

You will also be asked to affirm the recommendation for the replacement of John den Otter as Stated Clerk. See Appendix #4 of this document.

Thank you



John den Otter
Stated Clerk
905-331-3205

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1. DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

City	Church	Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Ralph	Luimes	Deacon Delegate
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Bruce	Dykstra	Elder Delegate
Ancaster	Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster	Meadowlands Fellowship	Harry	Van Dyke	Elder Delegate
Brantford	Hope	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Brantford	Hope	Fred	Reitsma	Elder Delegate
Brantford	Hope	Willem	Vos	Elder Delegate
Burlington	Burlington	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
Burlington	Burlington	Ted	Groenewegen	Elder Delegate
Burlington	Faith	Kevin	DeRaaf	Pastor Delegate
Burlington	Faith	Richard	Wiersma	Elder Delegate
Burlington	Faith	Wayne	Visser	Elder Delegate
Dundas	Calvin	Paul	Vanden Brink	Pastor Delegate
Dundas	Calvin	Jerry	Kralt	Elder Delegate
Dundas	Calvin	Rob	Koning	Elder Delegate
Flamborough	Calvary	Bernie	Voortman	Elder Delegate
Flamborough	Calvary	Bas	Hania	Elder Delegate
Flamborough	Calvary	Chris	Mantel	Elder Delegate
Flamborough	Calvary	Arnold	Wouda	Elder Delegate
Hagersville	Community	Jeff	Klingenberg	Pastor Delegate
Hagersville	Community	Stuart	Heeg	Elder Delegate
Hagersville	Community	Davis	Miedema	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	First	Chris	Schoon	Pastor Delegate
Hamilton	First	JD	Alkema	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	First	Richard	Hoiting	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	Immanuel	Henry	Kranenburg	Pastor Delegate
Hamilton	Immanuel	John	Benjamins	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	Immanuel	Anthony	Elenbaas	Pastor Delegate
Hamilton	Immanuel	David	Rumph	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	Mt. Hamilton	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	Mt. Hamilton	Harmen	Vandermeulen	Elder Delegate
Hamilton	New Hope	Aaron	DeVos	Non-Voting Delegate
Hamilton	New Hope	Tim	Brand	Non-Voting Delegate
Jarvis	Ebenezer	John	Huyser	Pastor Delegate
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Ray	Lenos	Elder Delegate
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Daryl	DeKlerk	Pastor Delegate
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Bernie	Wesseling	Elder Delegate
Simcoe	Immanuel	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pastor Delegate
Simcoe	Immanuel	Chery	Rutherford	Elder Delegate
Waterdown	Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Waterdown	Bethel	Mike	Tigchelaar	Elder Delegate
Waterdown	Bethel	Mike	Hutchings	Elder Delegate
Waterdown	Bethel	Jan	Eisses	Deacon Delegate
York	Maranatha	Maurice	Elgersma	Elder Delegate
York	Maranatha	Joel	Knight	Elder Delegate

2. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ancaster CRC requests:

Request that Classis has a discussion on the disbursement of Classical Ministry Quotas

Credentials Committee Recommendation:

1. That Classis Hamilton agree with the request of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church

Note of Clarification: ACRC is seeking an answer to the following question: *How are the congregations of Classis Hamilton doing in fulfilling their denominational ministry shares?*

2. That Classis Hamilton delegate this request to the Classis Finance Committee for future implementation at a Classis meeting.

2. Ebenezer CRC requests:

- a. *With regards to our overture for communication to Synod 2015 regarding our concerns for the study committee on same sex marriage, Pastor Daryl DeKlerk is prepared to speak to this overture.*

Credentials Committee Recommendation:

1. That Classis Hamilton receive this for information

2. That Classis Hamilton give Rev. Daryl DeKlerk the opportunity to speak to this overture when necessary

- b. *Schedule Conflict Notice with Synod: Though Pastor John Huyser had hoped to be a delegate, he is scheduled to perform a wedding during the time that Synod meets in June.*

Credentials Committee Recommendation:

That Classis Hamilton receive this for information

3. Bethel CRC, Waterdown

- a. *Bethel CRC, like a many of the churches in Classis Hamilton (based on queries made of them), would benefit from an education session on Church Governance as it relates to a Corporation in the Province of Ontario, at an upcoming Classis meeting.*

The content should include matters such as:

- *What is the role of a Board of Directors of a Corporation?*
- *What is the role of officers of the Corporation?*
- *What are the fiduciary responsibilities of the Directors / Officers of the Corporation?*
- *Are there any specific distinction between officers and directors and their respective accountabilities*
- *What recommendations would be made on best practices regarding structure?*
- *What recommendations would be made with regards to involving the Deacons as Directors / Officers, non-Council members, etc.?*

- *Officers and Directors Insurance, is this a requirement? What are the risks of not carrying this coverage?*
- *What impending changes are proposed legislatively for Ontario Corporations which CRC Corporations will need to align with? When is this expected to occur?*

Credentials Committee Recommendation:

1. That Classis Hamilton agree with the request of Bethel Christian Reformed Church – Waterdown

2. That Classis Hamilton delegate this request to the Classis Hamilton Ministry Team for future implementation at a Classis meeting - perhaps at a special evening session.

- b. Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Waterdown, Ontario, overtures Classis Hamilton to ask the Canadian Ministries Director of the CRC in NA to lead a process to give priority to and facilitate an agency-wide and every-congregation engagement for sponsoring refugees from the Middle East, particularly from Syria. This process may include raising awareness about their plight in countries of first asylum, the status of their protection with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other issues of Human Rights, and together with mandated Agencies of the CRC; and working together with other denominations and faith communities in order to welcome for settlements in Canada a greater number of Refugees than could be accommodated by our Government alone.*

Grounds:

- 1. God's Word calls us to seek justice and practice compassion for the homeless.*
- 2. Our churches have a commendable record of experience and expertise in sponsorship and resettlement.*
- 3. The overwhelming numbers of homeless and persecuted people in countries of first asylum cannot be cared for in present shelter camps for long.*
- 4. Their return to homeland is neither foreseeable nor safe.*
- 5. While the numbers of Refugees has grown alarmingly to millions, Canada's reception has declined to mere hundreds.*
- 6. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on January 7 announced that Canada will welcome 10,000 Syrians and 3000 Iraqi refugees. However, without prior consultation with us, he says that Canada will rely on private sponsors and Sponsorship Agreement Holders (as the CRC and World Renew) to carry out sixty percent of these sponsorships.*

Credentials Committee Recommendation:

That Classis Hamilton not accede to the request.

Ground:

Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Waterdown does not need an overture from Classis Hamilton to ask the Canadian Ministries Director of the CRCNA for this request. The Council of Bethel – CRC Waterdown is within its own authority to approach the Canadian Ministries Director directly.

3. OVERTURES COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Overture re: Article #23 (Agenda page 23 – Appendix #4)

Recommendation:

That Classis adopt the overture as submitted by CIC to be sent as an overture from CH to Synod 2015.

2. Overture re: Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis - Communication for Synod (Agenda page 45 – Appendix #13)

Observations:

General:

- We acknowledge the significant pastoral concerns related to the various experiences of those who are part of the LGBTQ or connected to them, and the discussions that are part of that. We are thankful that Synod 2013 took steps to help us address these through the appointment of a Synodical Study Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance Regarding Same-Sex Marriage.
- We acknowledge the tension and angst associated with concerns for all persons involved and concerns for following God's word for holy living.
- We recognize the weight of concern expressed by Ebenezer, and the importance of inviting Classis into their concern.
- We have noted that Ebenezer has engaged in dialogue (through their pastor) with Wendy VanderWal-Gritter, and have sent her a copy of their overture.
- We recognize that the mandate of this Synodical Study Committee does not include reconsidering the biblical teachings provided in the 1973 and 2002 Synodical reports.
- We have noted the offer of VanderWal-Gritter to meet with the Overture Committee and/or to be present at Classis. However, we have recognized that neither the Synodical Study Committee nor VanderWal-Gritter herself are on trial by way of this letter or on the floor of Classis.

Specific:

- The letter submitted by Ebenezer CRC makes several statements that are open to interpretation, which will make their letter, as written, difficult to adopt without engaging in line by line approval (and likely editing) on the floor of Classis.
- The letter includes a number of declarative assertions and 'intentions' as part of its content, including confession of select wrongs by the sexual 'majority' and an assessment that VanderWal-Gritter and Brownson are in the same category as "churches that have unmoored themselves from Scripture and shipwrecked the faith in the name of inclusiveness." Without further grounds and deliberations, these assertions add to the difficulty of Classis concurring with the letter from Ebenezer CRC as it is written.

- While we as an Overture Committee are not offering affirmative nor critical assessment of all the content included in the Ebenezer letter, we recognize that to do justice to this content would take significant work and grounds in order for Classis to consider adopting them.
- We believe the heart of the overture's intent is found in paragraph 7 where it states "...we question the appropriateness of [VanderWal-Gritter's] inclusion on the denomination's committee..."
- Given the mandate of the Synodical committee to work within the 'clearly laid out biblical principles and foundations' of the 1973 and 2002 reports, we agree there is reason to question the wisdom of including a member on this particular Synodical Study Committee who has advocated (through a book and by officiating at a gay marriage ceremony, as VanderWal-Gritter has) for a position regarding same-sex marriage that appears contrary to previous Synodical decisions and to the mandate of the current Synodical Study Committee.
- Given the discussion Classis had in the evening session of its October meeting and the clear division that was evident that evening, we believe it is very important that Classis not simply approve/disapprove Ebenezer's overture as written, but that we carefully consider the primary issue of suspicion raised by the inclusion in the committee's membership of someone advocating positions contrary to the Committee's mandate and previous Synodical reports.
- We note the following from the mandate given the Synodical Study Committee as found in Acts 2013, article 89:
 - “This study committee shall a. Give guidance and clarification on how members, clergy, and churches can apply the biblical teachings reflected in the *Acts of Synod 1973*, Report 42 (cf. also the report to Synod 2002) in light of the legality of same-sex marriage in certain jurisdictions, as well as how to communicate these teachings in a truthful and gracious way within North America.”

Recommendation:

That Classis Hamilton send the following communication to Synod 2015:

In session February 24, 2015, Classis Hamilton delegates discussed a concern raised by one of the churches about the makeup of the Synodical Study Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance Regarding Same-Sex Marriage.

We recognized with sadness a climate of uncertainty, suspicion, and question about how we are to resolve, let alone live within, the widely diverse opinions associated with the work of this committee and our intentions as a denomination to both be pastoral and give pastoral advice.

While we do not have answers for the work of this Synodical Study Committee, we as Classis Hamilton acknowledged that some decisions have fostered the difficult climate in which we find ourselves. One specific concern brought to the floor of Classis is the

appropriateness of having a member on this Synodical Study Committee who has advocated for positions outside the parameters of previous Synodical decisions (1973 and 2002) or the mandate of the current Synodical Study Committee (need reference from Acts of Synod yet) through her recently published book. This person's involvement on the committee has raised the level of uncertainty and suspicion regarding the work and forthcoming recommendations from the Synodical Study Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance Regarding Same-Sex Marriage.

As Classis, we have not discussed the work of this Synodical Study Committee, nor have we discussed the person or ministry of VanderWal-Gritter or her ability to meaningfully contribute to the work of this committee. However, we do believe that having a member serve on this Synodical Study Committee whose personal beliefs fall outside the foundational parameters of the Committee, namely to 'guide and clarify application of the biblical teachings' expressed with the 1973 and 2002 Synodical reports raises questions about the Committee's work on behalf of Synod and the congregations of the CRCNA. We believe this membership matter works against the ability of this particular study committee to gain the confidence of the denomination in receiving its advice, and has already contributed to unhelpful dialogue and suspicion.

We are not requesting any action from Synod. However, given the weight of our denominational discussions around same-sex relationships, as we have experienced within Classis Hamilton, we want to communicate our concern regarding this matter to Synod.

For Classis Hamilton,

Memo

To: Classis Hamilton
From: Team to recommend the appointment of the next Stated Clerk
Date: 26 January 2015

Having been appointed by the Classical Interim Committee to make recommendation regarding the next Stated Clerk of Classis Hamilton, we are pleased to submit this report to you.

Our committee, comprised of Henry Kranenburg, Marian Lensink and Bruce Adema, examined the relevant documents and interviewed the candidates for the position.

The task was not an easy one, as two excellent applications were received and both candidates would have done a fine job, and would have served Classis well.

Our recommendation is that Mr. Dick Kranendonk be presented to Classis for affirmation as the next Stated Clerk of Classis Hamilton.

Respectfully submitted,

The members of the Stated Clerk interview team.