

Report on the meeting of Classis Central US of the URCNA

Convening at the Covenant Reformed United Reformed Church in Pella, IA
March 3-4, 2014

Delegates to the 36th meeting of Classis Central U.S. arrived at the building of the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA and were greeted with Christian fellowship and a hot meal prior to beginning the meeting. Classis Central US convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 3, concluding in the morning of the following day. The two days saw unseasonably cold temperatures, which was quite different from our previous meeting in September, which had unseasonably warm temperatures. Regardless of the weather, the Lord gave grace to carry out the work He had given the Classis to perform.

The Monday evening session began with welcoming visitors and guests. The delegates then approved the work of the convening Consistory, the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer. Appreciation was expressed by the Classis to the Treasurer for his years of service. After this, the committee tasked with reviewing the credentials of the delegates reported that there were no requests for advice in the proper government of the church, which is a rare occurrence.

The Classis then took up the candidacy examination of Pablo Landazuri (Faith URC, Beecher, IL). Mr. Landazuri had been examined at the September Classis and was returning to be examined in two areas. Rev. Jacques Roets examined him in the area of Bible Knowledge; Rev. Simon Lievaart examined him in the area of Confessional Knowledge.

While the Faith URC Consistory deliberated about the examination, Rev. Edward Jensen brought greetings on behalf of the Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC); a letter of greeting was read from Classis Manitoba of The Canadian Reformed Churches. Church visitors reported on visits made to the Rock Valley URC (IA), Grace URC (Waupun, WI), Lynwood URC (IL), and Immanuel URC (DeMotte, IN).

The Faith URC Consistory returned and presented their judgment that Mr. Landazuri passed the two areas of the exam, with which the delegates to the Classis heartily concurred.

The delegates then enjoyed a brief time of fellowship prior to returning to hear reports of ecumenical activities of the churches. A delegate from Grace URC noted they had begun a group for single adults (age 18-30ish) from Reformational churches in their area. A delegate from Providence URC (Des Moines, IA) noted they had partnered with other like-minded churches concerning a conference on the history of Presbyterian and Reformed churches in North America.

A number of other reports were heard by the Classis. Rev. Harold Miller reported on his recent attendance at a meeting of the Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA. Rev. Tom Wetselaar reported for the Immanuel URC concerning the Church Planting Advisory Committee. Rev. Talman Wagenmaker reported for the Grace URC concerning oversight of the Classis website. Rev. Jody Lucero reported on the activity of the Federation Missions Committee. Rev. Dan Donovan reported on the activity of the CERCU. The reports were heard with interest.

Rev. Spencer Aalsburg reported on the work the Lord is doing in the Sioux Falls church plant. He noted that they have begun holding evening worship services twice a month in Sioux Falls while continuing to worship with the Hills URC congregation on the other evenings in the month. The Lord has been increasing the number of those who attend the corporate worship services, for which we give thanks.

Elder Martin Nuiver reported that the chaplain under the care of the Faith URC Consistory, Rev. Andrew Spriensma, has been reassigned stateside. He also noted that Rev. Valentine Alpuche, the church planter at El Pacto de Gracia, has accepted a call to an RCUS Hispanic church plant. The Faith URC Consistory requests prayer for Rev. Alpuche and that the Lord would bring a man to continue the work at El Pacto de Gracia.

In the morning session, delegates took up the five overtures on the agenda, four of which were intended to go to Synod Visalia. The first overture involved asking Synod Visalia to revise slightly the wording used in the credentials for Classis, substituting "Consistory" for "council,"

which will make the credentials consistent with the church order; the overture passed. The second overture involved asking Synod Visalia to establish a study committee to develop and recommend pastoral advice concerning the issue of membership "resignation"; after some discussion the overture passed. The third overture was somewhat similar to the second, asking Synod Visalia to empanel a study committee related to "desertion" of church membership; after some discussion the overture passed. The fourth overture involved matters related to the Rules of Procedure for Classis, seeking minor changes; two of the three changes were approved. At this point, the delegates paused in their work to enjoy a time of fellowship.

Returning from the break, the delegates took up the final overture, which asks Synod Visalia to make two affirmations concerning the translation/version of the Three Forms of Unity. The first affirmation seeks to have Synod affirm that the United Reformed Churches have accepted as confessionally binding the confessions which are included in the 1976 version of the Psalter Hymnal. The second affirmation seeks to have Synod recognize the 1958 revision of the Belgic Confession, article 36, including the "substitute statement" placed in a footnote (as appearing in the 1976 Psalter Hymnal) is part of our confessional binding. Both affirmations passed, the second one passed without dissent.

A few appointments were made just before Classis adjourned. Rev. Jody Lucero was elected as the Classis representative for the federation missions committee; Rev. Lucero had been serving as the interim representative. Mr. Martin Nuiver was elected as the Classis representative for the CECCA. All terms are for three years. The Sioux Center (IA) Consistory was appointed to coordinate and supervise the duties of the Classis Treasurer; this is of indefinite term.

The next meeting of Classis Central US is scheduled to convene September 15, 2014, the Lord willing. The Consistory of the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA is the convening consistory.

Classis wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the members of the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella for their gracious hospitality, to the Consistory of Redeemer URC (Orange City, IA) for its work in convening this meeting, to the examiners, and to Rev. Todd De Rooy for his excellent service as chairman.

For further information, contact Rev. Talman Wagenmaker, pastor of the Grace URC and Stated Clerk of Classis, by telephone at 920-324-2924 or via e-mail at ClassisCentralUS@gmail.com