

Classis Central US of the URCNA

Meeting Report

March 9, AD 2020

Two overtures and lots of reports occupied the delegates of Classis Central US as they gathered Monday afternoon and evening at the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa.

The overture that took the most time did not meet with Classis approval. It proposed the dismissal of the current federation Missions Committee and the establishment of a new committee with a new mandate and new guidelines for the Committee and for the Missions Coordinator. A second overture passed easily. It proposed entering into ecumenical relations with Classis Minnkota of the Christian Reformed Church. Classis Minnkota is a unique classis in the CRC because it is defined theologically rather than geographically. It is opposed to women in office and sends delegates to the CRC Synod each year under protest because the CRC synod allows women delegates. The means by which we will express our new relationship with Classis Minnkota is by the exchange of fraternal representatives at our classis meetings. Ecumenical relations at the level of a classis do not have organic union as a goal, and therefore do not come under the categories and guidelines of ecumenicity in the mandates of CERCU and CECCA. Our Church Order requires that this relationship be reported to synod. It is hoped that we can encourage these somewhat isolated churches, reminding them that they are not alone in contending for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.

An update was received on the work of Army Chaplain, Major Andrew Spriensma who has just completed an 18-month counseling degree program at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and who anticipates a move.

Encouraging reports, both written and oral, were received from the mission outreach in Chicago Heights and the church planting work in Quito, Ecuador. The churches of classis were urged to continue to support these two mission outreaches with their gifts and prayers.

We were pleased to receive fraternal greetings from Rev. Travis Grassmid of the South-Central Classis of the Reformed Church in the US. Notes of fraternal greeting were received from the Presbytery of Ohio (OPC), Classis Covenant East (RCUS), and Classis Manitoba (CanRC). We also heard an encouraging report of a visit by Rev. John Vermeer who was delegated by us to visit Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches. While in Canada, he was invited to lead worship and open God's Word in a Canadian Reformed Church.

Classis received reports from its representatives on the various federation committees and conducted elections for a few positions. On the classical level, Rev. Joel Vander Kooi was reappointed to serve as a classis church visitor for the West and Mr. Korrie Van Maanen, who is an alternate to the Church Planting Advisory Committee, was asked to fill in on that committee until the committee can come with a nomination to replace a member who retired this month. At the federation level, Mr. Gerald Swets was elected to a second term as our representative on the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad, and Rev. Jody Lucero was elected to a third term as our representative on the Missions Committee.

Advice was given to four consistories in matters of church discipline and prayer was offered for all the churches as they deal with difficult pastoral matters.

The next meeting of Classis Central US is slated to start Monday evening, September 14, 2020. The consistory of Doon URC has been asked to convene and host the meeting.

Classis wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the members of the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, and to their pastor, Rev. Doug Barnes, for their gracious hospitality, and to Rev. Ed Marcusse for his able leadership as chairman.