



Agenda for a Meeting of CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Date: October 27, 2015

Time: 10:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Venue: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 95 Oak Street. Simcoe N3Y 3K1

Officers of Classis: Chair: Bruce Adema Vice Chair: John Huyser Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk	Synodical Deputies: James Dekker Ronald Fisher Hendrik Bruinsma
Reporter: Meadowlands - Ancaster	Ballot Committee: Members of Immanuel CRC, Simcoe
Credentials Committee: Ancaster CRC, Ancaster Meadowlands CRC, Ancaster	Overtures Committee #1 (Overtures 8.1 – 8.4 & 8.6) Hope CRC, Brantford New Street CRC, Burlington Overture Committee #2 (Art. 14-b & Overture 8.5) Immanuel CRC, Hamilton Faith CRC, Burlington

CREDENTIALS:

1. The credentials shall be returned to the Stated Clerk by email no later than October 6, 2015 with CC: (copy) emailed to your delegates. Please note that there are additional questions on the credentials. Please fill them out as well.
2. The credentials will be forwarded to the Credentials Committee to review the contents. The Committee will email their report to the Stated Clerk by October 13, 2015. This will be emailed by the stated clerk to all the delegates.

OVERTURES:

The Overtures Committees will email their reports to the Stated Clerk by October 13, 2015 for distribution to the delegates of Classis as required.

EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGE:

All communication to the Stated Clerk should go via: clerk@classishamilton.ca.

MINISTRY SESSIONS:

Our next Classis Meeting is focusing on the theme: **MINISTRY IN THE MARGINS**. During the morning session we will hear from Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director about the **ministry of the CRCNA in Canada**. This will include a presentation from Danielle Rowaan of World Renew focusing on our **denomination's response to the refugee situation**. In the evening we will have a conversation around ministry to seniors, primarily those in long term care facilities. As our population ages, how are we continuing to provide **pastoral care for those seniors who reside in our communities**? Please encourage your congregation to join us for these important conversations. Everyone is welcome. We look forward to times of shared learning and deeper understanding of what God is calling us to do.

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MEETING DETAILS

10:00 AM	OPENING DEVOTIONS
OPENING WORSHIP	
1. OPENING PRAYER TIME	Prayer Coordinator: John Veenstra
2. DEVOTIONS AND SHARING OF MINISTRY	Immanuel CRC
3. PRAYER FOR IMMANUEL CRC	John Huyser
4. CALL TO ORDER	Bruce Adema
4.1. Approval of Agenda	
4.2. Attendance	
Overview of delegates present/absent	Dick Kranendonk
10:45 AM	MORNING MINISTRY SESSION
5. Refugee Concerns	Danielle Rowaan
6. Canadian Ministries (Appendix #11)	Darren Roorda
12:35 PM	LUNCH
1:20 PM	ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION
7. ARTICLE 14-b – Paul VandenBrink (Appendix #1)	Overture Committee #2
RECOMMENDED THAT: the request from Pastor Paul VandenBrink to be honourably released from ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in America be approved.	
8. ARTICLE 23-a – Examination of Theresa Bakker (Appendix #2)	Daryl DeKlerk
RECOMMENDED THAT: Theresa Bakker is declared eligible for ordination as commissioned pastor while serving as Pastoral Care Worker at Parkview Meadows under the supervision of the council of Immanuel CRC of Simcoe.	
9. CMT REPORT (INCLUDING CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEES) (Appendix #3)	Ken Benjamins
RECOMMENDED THAT: Pastor Rita Klein-Geltink be elected as the Chair of Classis for the calendar year 2016.	
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work of the CMT to date.	
10. GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION	Ralph Luimes
Response to the credentials request from Bethel CRC, Waterdown, presented to the February 2015 meeting of Classis.	
3:30 PM	COFFEE BREAK
11. CLASSIS MINISTRIES REPORTS	
11.1. CMT and Missions Director (Appendix #4.1)	Marian Lensink
11.2. McMaster/Mohawk Chaplain (Appendix #4.2)	Michael Fallon
12. INTERIM COMMITTEE	Henry Kranenburg
12.1. Interim Committee Report (Includes Stated Clerk's report, <i>Appendix #5</i>)	

- 12.2. **RECOMMENDED:** To approve the addition to the guidelines for Church Visitors the task of asking the churches whether they have an Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Policy in place and, if so, whether they have implemented that policy.

GROUND

Without encouragement, local churches may expose themselves to significant fines for not complying with these legal requirements.

- 12.3. Election of Delegates, Functionaries and Committee Members (*Appendix #6*)

- 12.4. Budget for 2016 (*Appendix #7*)

RECOMMENDED THAT: the classical ministry share budget for 2016 of \$69.66 be approved.

- 12.5. Approval of Classical Interim Committee and Stated Clerk Work

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work to date of the Interim Committee and of the Stated Clerk.

- 12.6. Balloting Committee Report

RECOMMENDED THAT: the ballots be destroyed.

13. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

14. CHURCH VISITORS SUMMARY REPORT: Will be printed in the ADDENDUM.

15. OVERTURES COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 15.1 Ancaster CRC, Ancaster (*Appendix #8.1*)

RECOMMENDED THAT: That Classis Hamilton set a cap of \$40,000 (Canadian) per year for funds allocated for our Forgivable Loans for Classis Hamilton Seminary Students, divisible among eligible applicants but to a maximum of \$5000 per student.

- Funds to be allocated equally among the students, pro-rated according to full or part time status, and attendance at other seminaries than CTS.

- 15.2 CHCC Overture for Classis Hamilton (*Appendix #8.2*)

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton cap potential assistance for the 2016-2017 academic year at \$75,000CA, roughly the current equivalent of 4 full time students at CTS.

- 15.3 CHCC Overture for Synod (*Appendix #8.3*)

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton overture Synod 2016:

1. That all needs based financial support for all CRC students attending CTS be awarded by CTS effective with enrolment for the 2017-2018 academic year.
2. To amend Church Order Article 43-a as follows:
 - a. Every classis shall maintain a Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
 - b. Every Classis, either individually, or in cooperation with other Classes, shall maintain a student fund to provide financial assistance to individuals preparing for ministry in the

Christian Reformed Church other than by means of the residential or distance education program offered by Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS).

- c. That the current Article 43-b be designated as Article 43-c.
3. The cost of CTS providing the needs based financial assistance program be included into the CTS ministry shares effective for the 2017 calendar year.

15.4 Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis (Appendix #8.4)

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton re-evaluate their plan to fully fund Calvin Seminary Students tuition in US dollars by 100%, capping our annual Candidacy Committee contributions to \$40,000 Canadian. Priority would be given to fulfilling our existing commitments we have already made. Furthermore, we request that Classis Hamilton cease making multi-year commitments to students when classis only approves the budget one year at a time.

15.5 Bethel CRC, Waterdown (Appendix #8.5)

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton revise its policy regarding Classical Appointments to the following (underscore is an addition, strikethrough is a deletion from the current guidelines):

CLASSIS PULPIT SUPPLY

1. Churches without a minister shall be entitled to request Classis pulpit supply for two Sundays per month from September through May, for their regularly scheduled morning service(s).
 - ~~1.1. A two-pastor congregation, with one vacancy will be allowed one Sunday per month.~~
 - 1.2. 1. Congregations, who obtain the services of a ~~full, or~~ part-time stated-supply minister, may ask for one Sunday per month, for their regularly scheduled morning service(s).
2. Ordinarily the Stated Clerk will maintain a list of retired ministers and other licentiates willing to help out on the Classis website.
3. A church whose minister is a synodical delegate shall be entitled to Classis pulpit supply for one Sunday (all services) while its minister attends Synod.
4. A church which receives Classis pulpit supply shall remunerate the church whose minister provides the service at the rate set by Classis and reviewed periodically. The travel expenses incurred by the guest minister as s/he fills the Classis appointment shall be paid directly to her/him by the church receiving his/her services, at a rate determined by Classis.
5. The Classis Interim Committee shall be responsible for preparing a pulpit supply schedule.

15.6 CHCC PROPOSAL REPORT (Appendix #8.6)

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. The Canadian classes together establish a Canadian seminary ranking system based on the quality of education provided from the perspective of our own CRC criteria. These criteria, among possible others, could include knowledge of worldview, confessions, Calvinist theology, and exposure to CRC church polity. A seminary meeting all four criteria would have a rank of 4, one meeting three criteria would receive a rank of 3, etc.
2. The further development and administration of the seminary ranking program as well as the student financial support decisions be carried out by a committee of one member elected by each participating classis from among members of their CMLTs or equivalent

committees. Each member would serve for a four year term and not be eligible for re-election. One-third of the committee members would retire each year. The committee should have the name **Unified Canadian Student Support Committee** (UCSSC). The committee could be established once three classes have agreed to join the unified program. Once a classis has decided to participate in the unified program, it should not be permitted to withdraw unless it gives three years notice of such a decision.

3. That the CRC Ministry in Canada Office in Burlington be asked to administer the student financial support funding pool to which each of the participating classes would remit their respective ministry share collections for that purpose. The Burlington office would annually advise the UCSSC the funds that are available from the prior year.
4. The UCSSC be restricted from disbursing more funds than were collected in the prior year. It will be up to the UCSSC to determine how funds will be allocated in years that the standard criteria in Recommendation 1 cannot be achieved.
5. The UCSSC advise each classis what the student financial support ministry shares should be for the next calendar year. To ensure that the participating classes are not exposed to budget surprises, the fluctuation in ministry share requests should not deviate by more than 10% from the prior year.
6. Each classis decides how to fund student financial support during the year of transition from their own program to the unified program in consultation with the UCSSC.

16. RESPOND TO DELEGATE REPORTS (Appendix #9)

17. RESPOND TO MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS (Appendix #10)

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM	DINNER
18. MINISTRY TO SENIORS:	Missions Director: Marian Lensink
9:30 PM Closing Devotions	BRUCE ADEMA

APPENDIX #1 - ARTICLE 14-b – Paul VandenBrink

APPENDIX #1.1 – LETTER FROM REV. PAUL VANDENBRINK

September 9, 2015

Dear member churches of Classis Hamilton,

I am writing this letter to formally request to be released from the ministry of the word according to Article 14-b of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. After ten plus years of ministry in Dundas Calvin Christian Reformed Church, I have responded to the call of God to plant a mission church in the town of Dundas with the Presbyterian Church in America. I have resigned my position at Calvin CRC, effective August 31, 2015 and intend to be ordained in the PCA at the October meeting of the Presbytery of Eastern Canada.

I have deeply appreciated my experience as a minister of the word in the CRCNA, particularly as the pastor of Calvin CRC in Classis Hamilton. I am indebted to the congregation of Calvin CRC for their gracious acceptance of my ministry among them. I am also grateful for the Council's consistent support and pastoral oversight of my work, and I will always cherish the opportunity to have worked under their leadership. Finally, I am thankful to have served Classis Hamilton in various capacities over the last decade. The comradery and counsel of my classis colleagues have been invaluable to me as I have grown as pastor and a follower of Christ.

As far as I know, the Council of Calvin CRC believes that I have met the requirements under Article 14-b of the Church Order to be honourably released from ministry in the CRC. I have tried to conduct myself in a manner worthy of such a designation during this entire process. Thank you for considering my request.

In Christ,

Paul Vanden Brink.



Calvin Christian Reformed Church

420 Highway 5 West, Dundas, ON, L9H 5E2
905.627.1562

September 8, 2015

To the churches of classis Hamilton,

In January of 2015, Pastor Paul Vanden Brink informed the council of the Calvin CRC that he was planning to attend a church planter evaluation at the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church in America in Atlanta, Georgia. He told us that this was in response to what he strongly believed was the Lord's calling for him. If the PCA approved his application, he said that he hoped to be able to start a new church plant in the town of Dundas. He made it very plain that he would only proceed with this plan if the council and congregation of the Calvin CRC were supportive of his goals and would not object to his beginning a new ministry in such close proximity to the Calvin church.

Council passed a formal motion to bless Pastor Paul in his plans to plant a new church. Council accepts the sincerity of Pastor Paul's sense of calling.

Pastor Paul's plans have been endorsed by the PCA and he has informed council that he would serve as our pastor until the end of August 2015. During the last months of his ministry at Calvin, Pastor Paul has continued to serve our congregation with integrity and dedication. His passion for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the prime motivation for his decision, and council wishes him a rich measure of God's strength and grace as he begins this daunting new ministry. Council does not believe that Pastor Paul will be "competition" for Calvin CRC, but rather that there will be one more voice bringing the Gospel to a community that desperately needs it. We hope that in the future we will be able to find ways to support and encourage Pastor Paul in his new ministry.

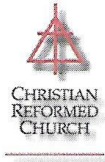
Council believes that Pastor Paul has met the requirements under article 14b of the church order for classis Hamilton to grant him an honourable release from the ministry in the CRC as he begins to follow what he believes is the Lord's calling for his life and ministry.

Done in council, September 8, 2015

Ed Scharringa, chair

Peter Kralt, clerk

APPENDIX #2 - ARTICLE 23-a: THERESA BAKKER EXAMINATION



Immanuel CRC
95 Oak Street
Simcoe, Ont.

To the members of Classis Hamilton:

It is with great honor and pleasure to recommend to examine Theresa Bakker as Commissioned Pastor At Parkview Meadows Retirement Village , at you next Classis meeting to be held in Simcoe Ontario October 2015.

By motion of Governing Council September 2, 2015.

John Oosterveld
Clerk of Governing Council.

Ted Berkel.
chair of Governing
Council

CLASSIS MINISTRY TEAM

Minutes

July 7, 2015

at Meadowlands CRC—10:00 am

1. Welcome and devotions: Ken led with reading from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – The Gospel in a nutshell.
2. Minutes of last meeting: June 16, 2015 – moved to adopt – carried. (one correction: Ken Benjamins appointed in 2014, not 2015)
3. Membership of the CMT
 - a. Theresa Bakker and Lorraine Voorberg declined to join CMT.
 - i. Suggestions: Alice VanWingerden (Simcoe Immanuel) – Mark to ask; Jackie Bootsma (Ancaster CRC) – Marian Lensink to ask; Mary Klingenberg (Hagersville Community) – Mark to call (if necessary); Gillian Bruce (1st CRC) – Victor Laarman to call (if necessary). Two to be chosen.
 - b. Liaison to different Committees of Classis – postpone until new members are on board.
4. Review of Mandate – Suggestion to have a “visioning” meeting – nothing else on our plates except to “dream the dream”. Consensus is to schedule this before the new “season” begins.
5. October Classis
 - a. Waterdown Request – Gina Taylor has declined her appointment to this ad hoc committee. Awaiting word from Mike Hutchings. John den Otter and Mike have the go-ahead to form a committee of two (or ask a third at their discretion). Dick Kranendonk to inform them.
 - b. Shalom Manor/Senior Ministry Discussion – John Postuma has agreed to join this ad hoc committee. Theresa Bakker and John Haverkamp have declined. Marian tentatively consents to being a facilitator of this discussion at Classis but wants to protect her “Mission Director” mandate with respect to what she becomes involved in.
 - i. Survey responses: 24 to-date. Some churches are dealing with the survey questions as a Council. When “Seniors” are being considered, the question seems inevitably linked to “Shalom”.
 - c. Church Visitor Reports – “state of the church” based upon a compilation of Church Visitors’ reports. This is an opportunity to “see” what is happening (or not happening) regarding mission among the churches of Classis Hamilton. Marian will connect with the Church Visitors and try to shape how this will unfold at October meeting of Classis.
 - d. Theme: “Ministry in the Margins”
 - e. Starting time and Classis Format: Considering the variety of discussions (World Renew request; Commissioned Pastor examination; Waterdown request; Seniors’ discussion) we are likely looking at an all day session. Notionally the World Renew discussion during the daytime; the Seniors’ discussion during the evening. Dick will put together a sketch of what the day’s agenda might look like.
 - f. Evening Discussion – see previous item.

6. Mission Director's Report –
 - a. Marian wants to involve the churches at a deeper level in Missional engagement:
 - i. Small Groups – four churches have expressed an interest in this;
 - ii. Outreach Teams within the churches; Experiment with this.
 - iii. Exploring Leadership stratagems.
 - b. What else might the churches want help with?
 - c. Marian has LOTS of ideas but “what do I do with them?” As part of our “dream the dream” discussions, CMT might consider how Classis can come alongside these ideas (our Mission Director should not become the “Missionary”).
7. Other Matters
 - a. Redeemer University and Classis
 - i. Might a “ministry fair” idea work at a specific meeting of Classis? Ken Benjamins will respond to Redeemer University's request after we've had our “brainstorming” session.
 - ii. Marian poses the question “How are we mentoring our Youth for considering their future?”
 - b. Chair for 2016 – suggestions: Chris Schoon; Everett VanderHorst; Joel Bootsma; to be contacted by Ken Benjamins in that order.
 - c. Report of Synod at Classis: Delegates (Henry Kranenberg & Rita Klein-Geltink) will be asked to provide a brief report to Classis. (Dick Kranendonk to ask)
 - i. Adding Deacons delegates to our regular Classis meetings (as per Synod 2015 - “1/3 of delegates should be Deacons”).
 - d. Darrin Roorda at Classis – see previous item relating to World Renew presentation.
 - e. Quad Classis Retreat – not a Classis issue.
 - f. Approving Licensed Exhorters: Those needing approval extended are on a list. The Stated Clerk alerts Classis to these as they arise.
 - g. Too many “trees” at Classis? Facilities for Classis meetings need to provide outlets for laptops whenever possible.
8. Next meeting date: Thursday, September 3rd @ 10:00 a.m. Mark to inform Meadowlands.
9. Closing - Marian

CLASSIS MINISTRY TEAM

Minutes

September 3, 2015

at Meadowlands CRC—10:00 am

Attendees: Pastor Ken Benjamins; Dick Kranendonk; Marian Lensink; Victor Laarman; Mark Vandervliet

Guest: Alice VanWingerden

1. **Welcome and Devotions** – Ken Benjamins - Eccl 3:9-14 (focus on Labour Day)
2. **Minor Matters**
 - a. Minutes of June Meeting – adopted with correction of 7f made in the original minutes.
 - b. New Members were potentially asked:
 - i. Alice Van Wingerden (Mark) – attended today's meeting in order to consider.

- ii. Jackie Bootsma (Marian) - declined
 - iii. Mary Klingenberg (Mark) – still to be contacted
 - iv. Gillian Bruce (Victor) – still to be contacted
- c. Recent Correspondence
 - i. Syd Heilema and Leslie to speak about Faith Formation at Classis – Marian will negotiate some time between Darren’s presentation and Syd’s presentation.
 - ii. Synod report
 - 1. Do our Synod delegates address Classis and give a report? – no report is being prepared. Not on the Classis agenda.
 - 2. Deacons at Synod – to be dealt with at congregational level (ie: delegating Deacons to Classis etc.)
 - 3. Blanket Exercise – to be considered for a future Classis meeting; perhaps when it better fits the overall Classis agenda.
 - iii. Darren Roorda wants to speak on Ministry Plans – see article 2.c.i.
 - iv. Other Correspondence - none
- d. October Classis Meeting
 - i. Dick needs our Classis Schedule approved – discussion about what to optimally schedule for the evening session. Adopted as Dick presented it (pdf file attached).
 - ii. Ken to Give CMT report at Classis – includes reports from all the standing committees (Candidacy) that may want to address Classis with their work. Marian will include reports on the three committees she’s involved in (Youth, Safe Church, Home Missions). We need to have a conversation at CMT about “reporting to Classis” so that the Chair and the Mission Director don’t duplicate reports (could it be a single report?).
- e. Chair of Classis meetings in 2016
 - i. Ken has received declines and maybes but no takers for this position. We agree to enable Ken to continue to explore possibilities.
- 3. **Visioning/ “Dream the Dream”** (below were some discussion starters; a synopsis of the discussion is appended – Appendix 1)
 - a. The question: What is our Vision? Where are we going? What should we aim for?
 - i. The question was asked, “What would Classis Look Like if our Slate was clean?”
 - ii. How can we mentor our youth better? Connect more with the standing committees?
 - b. Review of Minutes—noting, for example:
 - i. State of the Church report by Church Visitors
 - ii. Marian’s Comments on Missional Engagement
 - 1. Small Groups (4 Churches showed interest)
 - 2. Out Reach Teams within the churches
 - 3. Exploring Leadership stratagems
 - 4. Marian has “lots of other ideas”! (:
 - c. How do we shape our Classis meetings?
 - i. Make special theme days (Education, Out Reach, Youth Ministry, prayer, etc.)?
 - 1. How do we include places like Redeemer into the mix in a meaningful way?
 - ii. Can we include “Ministry fairs?”
- 4. **Date for Next Meeting** : November 12 @ 10:00 a.m.
- 5. **Closing:** Victor Laarman

Classis Ministry Team Report (CMT)

The Classis Ministry Team's primary role is to provide leadership and direction for all the activities of Classis so that *together* we might "be used by God to renew the greater Hamilton region through a gospel movement of healthy and vibrant churches, ministries and members."

In July our Team started up new discussions on how we might do our job in a better way. On September 3 we met for a special meeting to dream and to brain storm together. We are expecting a report with various recommendations at our next CMT meeting. One thing we all agreed on was to ensure that all classis meetings follow a unified theme. October's theme was approved already back in July: *Ministry in the Margins*.

Our committee is still short of members—which we are working hard to rectify. We are grateful that Alice VanWingerden has agreed to join us. Our hope is to have someone to connect directly with each committee of Classis. We are thankful for the good work of Marian Lensink, our Mission Director. More information regarding some of the different committees of Classis is provided in her report.

Ken Benjamins
Chair of the CMT

Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team (CHYMT) Report to Classis Hamilton - Fall 2015

Rev. Jeff Klingenberg, Chair

Your youth ministry team continues to meet faithfully each month throughout the year. The team consists of John Bijl (Meadowlands-Fellowship CRC, Ancaster), Betty Steenbeek (Ancaster CRC), Heather de Haan (New Street CRC, Burlington), Marian Lensink (ex officio Classis Hamilton Ministry Director, Faith CRC, Burlington) and myself (Hagersville Community CRC). Recently, Rev. Andrew Zomerman completed his 6-year term with us ... and we are very grateful for the gifts God has given him – his leadership will be missed.

Our vision statement continues to be ... God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, calls us to nurture the covenant youth of Classis Hamilton to grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and to join Him in His great work of reconciliation. Our mission is ...to be used by God to encourage, promote and facilitate the gifts of healthy, vibrant Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the congregations of Classis Hamilton.

As such, CHYMT has been involved in the following areas of service:

1. Coordination and promotion of monthly, evening youth services across Classis Hamilton

<u>DATE</u>	<u>HOSTING CONGREGATION</u>
Sept. 27	Hope CRC – Brantford
Oct. 25	? TBA
Nov. 29	New Street CRC – Burlington
Dec. 20	Hagersville Community CRC
Jan. 10	? TBA
Feb. 14	? TBA

Mar. 6	Ancaster CRC
Apr. 10	Ebenezer CRC – Jarvis
May 15	Immanuel CRC – Hamilton
June 12	? TBA

These dates have been planned with the worship services held occasionally at Redeemer University College and with the holiday/exam schedule of Hamilton District Christian High in mind so that there is no overlap. If your congregation wishes to host a worship event, please contact Pastor Jeff (pastorjeff.hccrc@gmail.com)

2. Planning and hosting of Youth Leaders' Breakfast for Classis Hamilton
Our next breakfast event will be held on November 7 at the Meadowlands-Fellowship CRC from 8-10am. Our theme is **"HELP! I'm in Charge!"** as we discover together strategies to equip people in youth leadership. This is a free-will offering breakfast. RSVP to marian@classishamilton.ca
3. Promoting Educational Opportunities for Youth Leaders
 1. All-Ontario Youth Convention – May long-weekend 2016
 2. Canadian Youth Network – Spring Breakfast Tour
 3. Redeemer University College – www.redeemer.ca
 4. Day of Encouragement Youth Ministry Workshops
 5. Youth Ministry Coaches' Corner – CRCNA webinars crcna.org/webinars
 6. Soul Care Retreat – Mount Mary Retreat Centre, Ancaster – January 22-24, 2016
4. Serving as a Link with the Faith Formation Team of our denomination
John Bijl serves as our champion in Classis Hamilton and works directly with the Canadian Youth Ministry Team led by Syd Hielema and Ron DeVries. John is available to Classis Hamilton for any youth ministry questions that we might have. He is our voice of support and encouragement.
5. Hosting a Facebook page for all of Classis Hamilton's youth ministry needs and challenges
Get on Facebook and check us out!
6. Listening to the Needs of Youth Leaders/Pastors Across Classis Hamilton
This past year the congregations of Ancaster CRC and Meadowlands-Fellowship CRC have hosted a SERVE project for their 6th year in a row. New Street CRC – Burlington hosted a SERVE project for their first time. Numerous congregations have sent mission team of high school and young adults through World Renew, Youth Unlimited and YouthWorks.

We request that Classis Hamilton consider the membership needs of the CHYMT – **we are in need of one more pastor and one more member-at-large to sit on our ministry team.** We seek to fulfill the mandate given to us by Classis Hamilton as best we can.

On behalf of your youth ministry team, we are grateful for your support --- Rev. Jeff Klingenberg, Chair

APPENDIX #4 – CLASSIS STAFF REPORTS

APPENDIX #4.1 – MISSION DIRECTOR REPORT

A new season has begun and ministry activity kicks into high gear as September hits. My work continues to focus on some of the committees of Classis, as well as engaging individual churches and staff.

The **Classis Youth Ministry Team** continues to be fruitful as with a team of individuals who serve youth ministry in their own churches with enthusiasm. Faith Formation Ministries (FFM) has appointed John Bijl, (a member of the team) to be the Classis Champion for youth ministry. The team will support him as he provides a link between FFM and the youth ministries of Classis Hamilton. The team is working to plan another breakfast for youth leaders, on Saturday Nov. 7th, focusing on how to plan weekly programs for youth ministry. This summer I had the privilege of observing the activity of our two Serve sites, in Ancaster and Burlington; I applaud the work done by our local teams.

With the **Safe Church Team**, I'm walking alongside Jessica Koning as the new Co-Chair. At time of writing we are still looking for a partner for her in this ministry. We continue to seek ways to support the Safe Church ministry in your churches; Jess has been calling all church reps to try and provide support and to determine where churches are at. Our next meeting is October 1, so please encourage your Safe Church reps or teams to attend this session. We are planning a segment of training around appropriate boundaries in ministry work.

The **Home Missions Committee** has struggled to find its way in this past year, but is looking forward to a new season. We continue to try to discern where God is leading in terms of missional activity in the Classis – which might be church planting or it might be other activity. Please let me or the Home Missions Committee know if you are considering some new missional activity; we'd love to know about it and talk about ways to support what you are doing.

John Veenstra, our **Prayer Coordinator** continues to work in the area of prayer. We are planning a prayer gathering, prior to Classis on Sept. 24th, and look forward to the chance to connect with others in the ministry of prayer.

In addition, I continue to work with a few churches in the area of Small Groups and am excited about the opportunity to gather people for greater missional activity. If your church is considering ways in which you'd like to get connected missionally, I'd welcome the chance to have a conversation with you. I'm excited about this next classis meeting as we consider the refugee situation. This continues to be a huge concern on a global level. I look forward to see what God will do in our churches and in our region as we reach out to those who are seeking refuge. We'll also engage a discussion about ministry to seniors in the evening session. Please encourage others to attend as we engage these discussions around Ministry in the Margins.

Marian Lensink
Classis Hamilton Mission Director

October 2015

Greetings Classis Friends and Supporters

Quite often when I preach in one of our churches in classis someone will ask me about our ministry at Mac and Mohawk – what are we doing, what should they pray for, what are our goals? Classis has equipped us with a dynamic mandate which gives us energy and focus. If I was to boil its points down, I would say that we are called to create a community to help our students, staff and faculty find God @ Mac & Mohawk. When I say that, I am not just referring to doing things such as worship or Bible studies, or works of justice ..., good things, things we do, but things not necessarily connected to what the university is about.

No, what I am referring to here is equipping our students and faculty to find God in their studies, in their research and in their classrooms. This is widely recognised as one of the strengths of our CRC Campus Ministries. To help those in academic institutions recognise God's presence, to see their research as Kingdom work and their careers as vocation where they are called to be agents of reconciliation.

How do we do that? We dip into our deep theological and philosophical well. Simply put, we affirm that Christ is the author of all truth. If a professor at Mac or Mohawk is teaching a truth - what we refer to as a creational norm, (and yes, most are) than God is the author of that truth. It does not matter if the instructor is a Christian or even antagonistic to the Christian faith. If they are teaching a truth – they are teaching something about God's creation/ His kingdom. Now there are nuances here as well as approaches we would say are not normative, and of course, we recognise that all teaching comes from a particular perspective or worldview - even if it is not voiced.

I have come to describe teaching presuppositions as the husk which surrounds the kernel – the kernel being what is normative. We need to be like farmers, sifting and winnowing the teaching we receive, separating the husk (the presupposition) from the kernel of God's truth inside. Actually this is just part of becoming a mature Christian - we need to learn to discern things, become sensitive to the creational order. This connection is 'key' for the faith journey of our students. If they do not understand that God is intimately involved in their studies/research /work the tendency would be for them to become dualists. Christ would not be the reconciler of "all things." No, he would be the reconciler of "some things." A curtain would fall between Sunday and the rest of the week.

Through study, open discussion, prayer and reflection, our Classis Hamilton CRC Campus Ministry will seek to nurture wisdom in the hearts and minds of the students, staff and faculty we encounter at McMaster University and Mohawk this academic year. Please pray for us.

Dr. Michael D. Fallon

fallonm@mcmaster.ca or (289) 660-6134

APPENDIX #5 – CIC AND STATED CLERK’S REPORT

Following is a list of the major items of interest since the last meeting of Classis:

1. Officers of the BoD and CIC for 2015-16

The corporate officers (BoD) were appointed as follows: Henry Kranenburg, President; John den Otter, Vice-President; and Henk Van Tuyl, Secretary-Treasurer. The officers of the CIC are: Henry Kranenburg, President; John den Otter, Vice-President; and Dick Kranendonk, Stated Clerk.

2. Communications Received and Sent

Since mailing the agenda for the May 26, 2015 Classis meeting, your Stated Clerk received an average of 50 emails and letters per week and sent out 45 per week. We are thankful for the ease of electronic communication, but even more grateful that very few of these messages required snail mail.

3. Shalom Manor Pulpit Supply

Since Shalom is not a church, it was concluded that pulpit supply for that institution falls outside the pulpit supply policy.

4. New Hope Emerging Church Request

The New Hope request for Church Visitors to discuss the process for formally organizing the emerging church be assigned to Church Visiting Team B, made up of Jerry Hoytema, Jake Ellens and Ted Bootsma with the clear understanding that First Hamilton CRC be included in this discussion as previously decided by Classis Hamilton, Minute 7.0, May 21, 2013.

5. Compliance with Ontario Accessibility Act

In response to the request of Hope CRC, Brantford, Bert Zwiers, Cor Visser and Dick Kranendonk were appointed to work on developing an appropriate policy for churches in Ontario in consultation with the denominational Disability Concerns Committee via the Burlington Office of the CRCNA. This work was completed by providing a template policy to the denominational Disability Concerns Committee. That Committee has agreed to include the template on its website once it has been vetted by a lawyer competent in the area.

6. Request for Church Councillor by Calvin CRC, Dundas

With the resignation of Paul VandenBrink, the CIC agreed with the request of Calvin CRC, Dundas to appoint Andrew Zomerman as Church Councillor during their calling process.

7. Keeping Minutes in Electronic Form

The Stated Clerk is authorized to keep agendas, minutes and other records only in electronic form with the understanding that an appropriate backup procedure is in place.

8. Membership of CIC

The Chair of Classis, Stated Clerk and Mission Director are members of the CIC by virtue of their office. The CIC previously has been instructed by Classis to present a single slate of nominees to be elected after soliciting names from the churches and that no names for membership on the CIC can be made from the floor of Classis. Consequently, it is within the authority of the CIC to ensure that the Chair and Reporter of the CMT are on the ballot for the annual election of CIC members.

9. Pulpit Supply List

Mark Vandervliet has agreed to annually prepare the list, taking over this responsibility from Henk Van Tuyl. An overture is presented to Classis proposing amendments to the Rules of Procedures. Churches are asked to address any concerns they have with the current Pulpit Supply policy or guidelines to the Stated Clerk who will submit them to the Overture Committee dealing with this issue.

10. Parkview Meadows Job Description re Art. 23-a

A concern was raised that it is not entirely clear whether the Job Description that was approved by Classis with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies is actually a Job Description that Parkview Meadows has adopted. A change in the Rules of Procedure to make this requirement clear was deferred to a later date once the denominational office has acted on the assignment by Synod 2015 to address the ambiguities in Supplement, Article 23-a of the Church Order.

11. Website

Marian Lensink was authorized to redesign the website incurring expenditures not to exceed \$800. Marian may request the assistance of others in the process of developing, updating and maintaining the website. John Gilson has indicated that he wishes to resign his position as webmaster effective September 2015.

12. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis; Shalom Chaplaincy Overture

The CIC decided to postpone the discussion of the tabled Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis overture until the February meeting of Classis so that the congregations have time to reflect on the seniors' care discussion that takes place during the evening session of the October Classis meeting.

13. Budget and Other Policy Matters

The CIC spent a significant amount of time discussing the amount that would be reasonable and appropriate to hold as financial reserves in light of both legal and ethical considerations and reporting requirements. The Finance Committee was asked to present a policy proposal to the BoD before the end of 2015. The CMT will contact those ministry committees that might be affected by any change in historical practices.

During the discussion and as a result of the presentation by a Finance Committee member at the June 4th CIC meeting, it has become clear that more work needs to be done by those CIC members who are also directors to gain a better understanding of their fiduciary and other legal duties. The Finance Committee will present a report of current policies that apply to them, but the administration of property, including capital property, personnel and money, goes beyond the Finance Committee's mandate. The BoD will be addressing those going forward.

14. Redeemer University College Board Representation

In light of the resignation of Paul VandenBrink as pastor and member of the CRC, the CIC believes it appropriate for another classical delegate to be appointed to fill the remaining term of Paul VandenBrink given his change in denominational membership.

Dick L. Kranendonk – Stated Clerk,
clerk@lassishamilton.ca

APPENDIX #6 – DELEGATE, FUNCTIONARY AND COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The following are openings and nominated as of September 14, 2015. Nominations will be accepted up to and including at the Classis meeting itself.

CHURCH VISITORS

Andrew Zomerman (Team A)

Jeff Vandermeer (Team B)

CLASSIS MINISTRY TEAM

Alice VanWingerden

CLASSIS HAMILTON HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

CHMC seeks a member preferably from one of the more rural churches.

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A person is to be nominated to replace Paul VandenBrink

In selecting your nomination, Redeemer University College respectfully asks Classis to consider the following:

- The primary qualification for a Board member is that a person is a committed Christian who shares the vision, mission and purpose of Redeemer as outlined in the attached document.
- Our Board also has guidelines to achieve appropriate professional skills among Board members. At present, there is a particular need for persons with expertise in **development/fundraising, business/marketing, governance, agriculture and construction/engineering.**
- Our Board also seeks diversity in gender and ethnic background in our Board membership. We currently have 15 men and 4 women who are members of the Board. Also, we are seeking to increase the ethnic diversity of the Board.

CALVIN COLLEGE

Classes Hamilton, Chatham, Huron and Niagara are requested to provide a minimum of two nominations for election to the Board of Trustees of Calvin College.

DENOMINATIONAL CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

A nomination is required to serve on the CCC. Preferably the minister to be nominated has previously served as a Synodical Depute, or served in a similar leadership role.

BACK TO GOD INTERNATIONAL

Gregory A. Fluit's first term will expire in June 2016 but is eligible for re-election. Classis is asked whether there are any reservations re this nominee for a second term.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Garry Sytsma's first term will expire in June 2016 but is eligible for re-election. Classis is asked whether there are any reservations re this nominee for a second term.

APPENDIX #7 – CLASSICAL MINISTRY SHARE BUDGET

CLASSIS MINISTRY SHARES 2016

	Amount			Share			
	2016 Budget	% of Total	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	2015 Budget	2015/16 \$ Incr/(Decr)	2015/16 % Incr-/Decr
Number of Members	3,720		3,671			49	1.33%
Classis Expense Fund	34,296.00	13.2%	43,324.00	9.22	11.80	(2.58)	-21.88%
McMaster Campus Ministry	108,650.00	41.9%	108,614.00	29.21	29.59	(0.38)	-1.28%
Classical Candidacy Committee	75,000.00	28.9%	40,000.00	20.16	10.90	9.27	85.03%
Shalom Manor Chaplaincy	40,381.00	15.6%	40,381.00	10.86	11.00	(0.14)	-1.32%
Youth Ministry	800.00	0.3%	2,000.00	0.22	0.54	(0.33)	-60.53%
Future Church Plant	-		-	-	-	-	
Classis Ministry Team	-		-	-	-	-	
	\$ 259,127.00	100.0%	\$ 234,319.00			-	
	69.66		63.83	69.66	63.83	5.83	9.13%

2015 Special Assessment

7.32

re: Candidacy Committee

Detailed ministry expenditure budgets were distributed to the churches as an appendix to the BOD minutes of September 10, 2015. These were reviewed by the BoD and CIC as part of its assignment to reduce the amount of administrative work Classis delegates need to do. However, if churches have any questions about the expenditure details in the budget sheets included in the BoD minutes, please, feel free to ask. Such questions should be addressed to the Stated Clerk in advance of the Classis meeting.

- Classis Expense Fund shows a budget reduction for the year 2016 as the remainder of their expenses will be covered by the use of built-up reserve funds from previous allocations to committees no longer in existence. As well, we are utilizing the balance in the actual Reserve Fund of Classis Hamilton which will deplete the fund by the end of 2016.
- The per member share budget for 2016 is \$69.66 as compared to the 2015 per member share budget of \$63.83 plus the special assessment of \$7.32 making a per member share total of \$71.15 for 2015 – a net reduction of \$1.49 per member share year-over-year.
- Another positive impact on the budget is the fact that membership numbers for calculating the 2016 budget is based on an increased membership from 3,671 in 2015 to 3,720 in 2016 which means that more members are contributing to the total expenses requiring less from each.
- The Finance Committee has been asked by the BoD to prepare a Reserve Policy before the next Budget Year in order to utilize annual total revenues in the most efficient manner.

APPENDIX 10.4 of this agenda may be of interest to councils and delegates to compare Classis Hamilton's ministry shares with those of other Canadian classes.

APPENDIX #8 – OVERTURES

APPENDIX #8.1 – ANCASTER OVERTURE

To: Classis Hamilton
From: Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
Date: August 10, 2015
Re: Classical Support for Seminary Students

Background

In 2014 Classis Hamilton adopted a new policy regarding financial assistance of seminary students, and decided to support students attending Calvin Theological Seminary with full tuition in US dollars. The Classical Candidacy Committee makes recommendations to Classis regarding the disbursements. The monies granted to students are awarded as “forgivable loans.”

This policy was discussed at the May meeting of Classis Hamilton when it was learned that the budgeted amount for 2015 was not sufficient to cover the approved disbursements. A comment was made that we could expect an even higher total next year.

From the Classis minutes of May 26, 2015:

There was considerable discussion regarding the high cost of student assistance carried by Classis Hamilton as a result of having two postsecondary universities in its region. Various suggestions were made to deal with the many inequities in the current system of funding students attending CTS. The Candidacy Committee and the CIC will be addressing these observations. On motion duly made, seconded and carried IT WAS RESOLVED THAT: the following forgivable loan disbursement amounts for the 2015-2016 academic year are approved: Nathan Klingenberg: M.Div. \$14,619.00USD Wim DeVries: M.Div. \$14,619.00USD Corey VanHuizen: M.Div. \$3,655.00USD Courtney Mooney: EPMC \$1,500.00CAD Mark DeVos: EPMC \$1,500.00CAD Ben Verkerk: M.Div. \$14,619.00USD For a total of \$47,512.00USD and \$3,000.00 CAD. For a total of \$47,512.00USD and \$3,000.00 CAD.

Overture

Ancaster CRC presents the following overture to Classis Hamilton:

That Classis Hamilton set a cap of \$40,000 (Canadian) per year for funds allocated for our Forgivable Loans for Classis Hamilton Seminary Students, divisible among eligible applicants but to a maximum of \$5000 per student.

- Funds to be allocated equally among the students, pro-rated according to full or part time status, and attendance at other seminaries than CTS.

Grounds:

1. Classis continues to recognize the importance of supporting our seminary students through encouragement, prayer, and financial assistance.
2. Students should see the financial support offered by Classis as a privilege, rather than a right or expectation.
3. Any person attending a post secondary institution can expect to incur the cost of their program.
4. Classis Hamilton may discover that there are other ministry initiatives where we should be allocating our resources.

5. Fluctuations in the US exchange rate cannot be predicted. A fixed dollar amount would alleviate this uncertainty when preparing the budget for Classis.
6. While financial support of our students is important, there are other ministry opportunities that Classis should be considering when allocating our resources.

APPENDIX #8.2 – OVERTURE FOR CLASSIS FROM CHCC

August 19, 2015

TO CLASSIS HAMILTON

The Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee (CHCC) has received questions and concerns from individual CRC members and on behalf of Classis Hamilton congregations regarding assistance Classis provides for students preparing of ordained ministry in the CRCNA. Students assisted through Classis Hamilton mostly have attended Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) or been enrolled in the EPMC non-residential program. A few students have attended other approved Canadian seminaries. The questions and concerns brought to the attention of the CHCC can be organized into two groups: quality of education and student financial support. In order to set the context for engaging these broader concerns, this overture provides a summary background regarding the practice and Church Order expectations regarding Classical involvement in ministry preparation and student financial assistance.

Church Order Background

Church Order, Article 43-a, requires each Classis to maintain a student fund and a Classical Ministries Leadership Team (CMLT). The purpose of the fund is “to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.” Synod 2010 added this section to the *Church Order* as a way of deepening the formative experience, accountability, and support for students pursuing ordained ministry in the CRCNA. Prior to Synod 2010, many Classes maintained active funds designed to assist seminary students. While the support levels, means of distributing funds, and accountability levels differed from Classis to Classis, the underlying principle that Classes ought to help students prepare for ministry has been a long-standing practice throughout our denomination. As the *Church Order* now stands, this long standing practice is now an expectation of all Classes in the CRCNA.

Quality of Education

The expressed concerns about the quality of education have primarily focused on the depth of understanding that students from seminaries other than CTS have regarding Reformed worldview, confessions, doctrines, and church polity. This concern is partially offset by Synod’s requirement that such students also enrol in the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) program, through which they are guided into the CRC context via additional course work at CTS and mentoring by a current CRCNA minister and a mentoring team. While these EPMC initiatives assist in addressing some of the concerns, our experience is that those graduating from seminaries other than CTS have generally missed out on the depth and breadth of Reformed theological education provided through CTS. While Synod has affirmed the work of the denominational Candidacy Committee and the desire to make room for students trained at seminaries other than CTS, concerns persist that those educated outside of CTS are not being equipped within a Reformed worldview and with the necessary theological framework for ministry in the CRCNA. Partially in response to these concerns, the CHCC proposed a policy shift in 2014 that emphasized the importance of prospective ministers to pursue their education at CTS. This proposal, adopted by Classis Hamilton in May 2014, included a strong financial incentive for students to choose CTS, providing guidelines for up to the full amount of their tuition in US\$ that would be made available through a forgivable loan from Classis Hamilton. For students enrolling at CTS (in residence), this commitment would be made for the full four years of their program. Students attending other seminaries would be funded only up to 50% of their tuition for that year and only after all CTS students had been funded on a year by year basis. The new policy has been effective in encouraging students to attend CTS in preparation for ministry as several students have noted how Classis Hamilton’s assistance has made it financially possible for them to attend CTS.

Student Financial Support

Since the new policy was adopted in 2014, there has been a drastic change in the exchange rate between the CAN\$ and the US\$. When the policy was first being developed, the exchange rate hovered around 5%. As of August 2015, it is about 30%. This global financial situation has prompted concerns about the capacity of our Classis to sustain the desired support levels articulated in the policy adopted last year. These emerging questions related to sustainability have occasioned the second area of concern: student financial support.

The success of the CHCC to encourage more students to attend CTS has strained the Classis Hamilton financial resources, prompting a request in May 2015 for additional resources to meet the anticipated needs for the 2015-2016 academic year. While Classis Hamilton approved the requested increase for this year, the CHCC has since been involved in conversations with the Classis Hamilton Finance Committee (CHFC) about long term sustainability. A wide range of concerns have been expressed by individual pastors, finance committee members, and at least one Council is sending an overture to Classis regarding the need to limit the financial resources that will be made available in future years. In dialogue with the CHFC, the CHCC has agreed to limit the number of FT students it will support beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year and to cap fund requests at \$75,000CA, while more sustainable long-term solutions are pursued.

In addition to the pressing question about Classis Hamilton's financial capacity to support students, several other financial concerns have been expressed. These concerns include the following:

1. CTS Need-based Support for Students: Any CTS need-based support is determined after other forms of support, including Classis assistance, have been exhausted. The determination of need by CTS occurs after Canadian students are required to demonstrate to the U.S. government that they have funding arranged for the duration of their program.
2. U.S. Student Visa Requirements: Current U.S. student visa applications require students to provide proof that they have enough money to fully fund the tuition costs for their entire program.
3. U.S. Employment regulations: Without U.S. citizenship, students and their spouses coming from Canada are not eligible for general employment in the USA. This restriction limits our students to a small selection of low paying, on campus positions. Without independent wealth, our students will therefore need to obtain assistance in the form of loans and gifts in order to pay for most of their seminary education.
4. Early Classis Financial Assistance Timetable: In order to present a request at the May Classis meeting regarding the proposed distribution of forgivable loan funds for the upcoming academic year, the CHCC requires prospective and returning students to submit their application materials by March 1 each year. This early date often precedes award notices regarding scholarships and awards, whether from CTS or other institutions. As such, our forgivable loan recommendations are made on the front end of the award cycle, rather than as a supplement to other potential sources of assistance. The repercussions of this timetable include the potential for incomplete and inaccurate determination of financial need by our committee and disincentivizing students from pursuing other forms of financial assistance.

Ongoing Dialogue & Discernment

In response to the areas of concern noted above, the CHCC continues to evaluate the impact of our current policy upon our students and Classis, to consider alternative funding paradigms, and to encourage dialogue at Canada wide and denominational levels regarding the challenges our Classis has encountered in recent years. In a recent conversation with Stated Clerks from across Canada, facilitated by the Canadian Ministries Director, the CHCC was

asked to draft a paper to address the concerns about the quality of education being received through non-CTS seminaries and how financial funding could be better aligned across the Canadian Classes. The hope is that we can come to a national agreement not only as to how to qualify Canadian seminaries, but also how to provide consistent financial support for CRCNA students who choose to attend qualified Canadian seminaries.

The more urgent, locally experienced concern is discerning how to determine support levels for Classis Hamilton students attending CTS. This issue is not only a fiscal capacity issue for Classis Hamilton, but also an issue of equity between Classes, and of justice for Canadian students in the context of government restrictions impacting the bi-national realities of our denomination. Two realities have become quite evident in this regard.

First, when more than one related organization provides needs based financial assistance, inequities are bound to arise, often dependent on which organization determines need first. As such, with CHCC determining financial need for students before CTS does, the result is that Classis Hamilton appears to have a higher percentage of required assistance than most non-Canadian Classes. When compounded by the number of students we have attending CTS, the discrepancy of determining financial aid before CTS leads to an overwhelming need.

Second, because of the timing around student visa requirements and Classis budget disbursement approvals, and the subsequent need to determine student need before CTS does – all complicated by the current depreciation of the exchange rate Classis is experiencing a significant level of anxiety and financial strain in providing assistance to students attending CTS. For Classis Hamilton, this strain has reached a tipping point. The CHCC believes that both these experienced realities are not healthy for Classis Hamilton, or the CRCNA as a whole. Consequently, CHCC recommends that Classis Hamilton take the following action to address these issues as an interim step until the other two initiatives (overture to Synod 2016 and Proposal for Unified Student Funding among Canadian Classis) have been pursued.

Recommendation

1. That Classis Hamilton cap potential assistance for the 2016-2017 academic year at \$75,000CA, roughly the current equivalent of 4 full time students at CTS.

Grounds:

- 1.1 This will not unnecessarily put currently approved students in either financial or visa difficulties.
- 1.2 This will allow the overture to Synod 2016 to run its course without hasty action by Classis before that time.
- 1.3 This will give the CHCC time to work with the other Canadian Classis for the purpose of developing a Unified Student Support Program that, should Synod 2016 reject the proposed overture, could include students at CTS.

APPENDIX #8.3 – OVERTURE FOR SYNOD FROM CHCC

August 19, 2015

TO CLASSIS HAMILTON FOR SUBMISSION TO SYNOD 2016

The Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee (CHCC) has received questions and concerns from individual CRC members and on behalf of Classis Hamilton congregations regarding assistance Classis provides for students preparing of ordained ministry in the CRCNA. Students assisted through Classis Hamilton mostly have attended Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) or been enrolled in the EPMC non-residential program. A few students have attended other approved Canadian seminaries. The questions and concerns brought to the attention of the CHCC can be organized into two groups: quality of education and student financial support. In order to set the context for engaging these broader concerns, this overture provides a summary background regarding the practice and Church Order expectations regarding Classical involvement in ministry preparation and student financial assistance.

Church Order Background

Church Order, Article 43-a, requires each Classis to maintain a student fund and a Classical Ministries Leadership Team (CMLT). The purpose of the fund is “to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.” Synod 2010 added this section to the *Church Order* as a way of deepening the formative experience, accountability, and support for students pursuing ordained ministry in the CRCNA. Prior to Synod 2010, many Classes maintained active funds designed to assist seminary students. While the support levels, means of distributing funds, and accountability levels differed from Classis to Classis, the underlying principle that Classes ought to help students prepare for ministry has been a long-standing practice throughout our denomination. As the *Church Order* now stands, this long standing practice is now an expectation of all Classes in the CRCNA.

Quality of Education

The expressed concerns about the quality of education have primarily focused on the depth of understanding that students from seminaries other than CTS have regarding Reformed worldview, confessions, doctrines, and church polity. This concern is partially offset by Synod’s requirement that such students also enrol in the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) program, through which they are guided into the CRC context via additional course work at CTS and mentoring by a current CRCNA minister and a mentoring team. While these EPMC initiatives assist in addressing some of the concerns, our experience is that those graduating from seminaries other than CTS have generally missed out on the depth and breadth of Reformed theological education provided through CTS. While Synod has affirmed the work of the denominational Candidacy Committee and the desire to make room for students trained at seminaries other than CTS, concerns persist that those educated outside of CTS are not being equipped within a Reformed worldview and with the necessary theological framework for ministry in the CRCNA. Partially in response to these concerns, the CHCC proposed a policy shift in 2014 that emphasized the importance of prospective ministers to pursue their education at CTS. This proposal, adopted by Classis Hamilton in May 2014, included a strong financial incentive for students to choose CTS, providing guidelines for up to the full amount of their tuition in US\$ that would be made available through a forgivable loan from Classis Hamilton. For students enrolling at CTS (in residence), this commitment would be made for the full four years of their program. Students attending other seminaries would be funded only up to 50% of their tuition for that year and only after all CTS students had been funded on a year by year basis. The new policy has been effective in encouraging students to attend CTS in preparation for ministry as several students have noted how Classis Hamilton’s assistance has made it financially possible for them to attend CTS.

Student Financial Support

Since the new policy was adopted in 2014, there has been a drastic change in the exchange rate between the CAN\$ and the US\$. When the policy was first being developed, the exchange rate hovered around 5%. As of August 2015, it is about 30%. This global financial situation has prompted concerns about the capacity of Classis Hamilton to sustain the desired support levels articulated in the policy adopted last year.

The success of the CHCC to encourage more students to attend CTS has strained the Classis Hamilton financial resources, prompting a request in May 2015 for additional resources to meet the anticipated needs for the 2015-2016 academic year. While Classis Hamilton approved the requested increase for this year, a wide range of concerns have been expressed by individual pastors, and at least one Council which sent an overture to Classis Hamilton addressing this subject. There appears to be general agreement that a more sustainable solution, particularly as it relates to student at CTS, needs to be pursued.

In addition to the pressing question about Classis Hamilton's financial capacity to support students, several other financial concerns have been expressed. These concerns include the following:

1. CTS Need-based Support for Students: Any CTS need-based support is determined after other forms of support, including Classis assistance, have been exhausted. The determination of need by CTS occurs after Canadian students are required to demonstrate to the U.S. government that they have funding arranged for the duration of their program.
2. U.S. Student Visa Requirements: Current U.S. student visa applications require students to provide proof that they have enough money to fully fund the tuition costs for their entire program.
3. U.S. Employment regulations: Without U.S. citizenship, students and their spouses coming from Canada are not eligible for general employment in the USA. This restriction limits Canadian students to a small selection of low paying, on campus positions. Without independent wealth, Canadian students will therefore need to obtain assistance in the form of loans and gifts in order to pay for most of their seminary education.
4. Early Classis Financial Assistance Timetable: In order to present a request at the Spring Classis meetings regarding the proposed distribution of student support funds for the upcoming academic year because of the US visa requirements, the Canadian CMLTs or Student Fund Committees require prospective and returning students to submit their application materials by March 1 each year. This early date often precedes award notices regarding scholarships and awards, whether from CTS or other institutions. As such, Canadian student support decisions are made on the front end of the award cycle, rather than as a supplement to other potential sources of assistance. The repercussions of this timetable include the potential for incomplete and inaccurate determination of financial need by the Canadian committees and disincentivizing students from pursuing other forms of financial assistance.

Ongoing Dialogue & Discernment

In response to the areas of concern noted above, the CHCC further evaluated the impact of its current policy upon students and Classis, by considering alternative funding paradigms, and to encourage dialogue at Canada wide and denominational levels regarding the noted challenges.

The more urgent concern is discerning how to determine support levels for students attending CTS. This issue is not only a fiscal capacity issue, but also an issue of equity between Classes, and of justice for Canadian students in

the context of government restrictions impacting the bi-national realities of our denomination. Two realities have become quite evident in this regard.

First, when more than one related organization provides needs based financial assistance, inequities are bound to arise, often dependent on which organization determines need first. As such, with Canadian Classes determining financial need for students before CTS does, the result is that Canadian Classes appear to have a higher percentage of required assistance than most non-Canadian Classes.

Second, because of the timing around student visa requirements and Canadian Classes budget disbursement approvals, and the subsequent need to determine student need before CTS does – all complicated by the current depreciation of the exchange rate – Canadian Classes are experiencing a significant level of anxiety and financial strain in providing assistance to students attending CTS. For Classes with multiple students attending CTS, like Classis Hamilton, this strain has reached a tipping point, with some Classes encouraging students to consider other alternatives than CTS for their seminary education. The CHCC believes that both these experienced realities are not healthy for the Canadian Classes, or the CRCNA as a whole. Consequently, CHCC recommends that Classis Hamilton present the following overture to Synod 2016 to address these issues.

It would not appear to be desirable to present an overture that affects only Canadian CRCNA students studying at CTS. Neither does there appear to be a compelling reason to restrict the proposals in this overture to Canadian CRC students. For that reason, the recommendations in this overture are written to address the bi-national denomination as a whole.

Recommendations

1. That Classis Hamilton overture Synod 2016:

That all needs based financial support for all CRC students attending CTS be awarded by CTS effective with enrolment for the 2017-2018 academic year.

GROUND:

- 1.1 Needs based financial assistance can be reasonably determined by only one of CTS or classis, but not by both.
- 1.2 If CTS provides all CRC sourced, needs based financial assistance to qualifying students it will lead to greater equity for all CRC students, if not in reality, at least in perception.
- 1.3 The inability of students and their spouses from certain segments of the bi-national denomination to be gainfully employed near the CTS campus can be considered most effectively by CTS.
- 1.4 Should there be a serious need for additional student financial assistance, CTS is in a better position to engage in additional designated fundraising than the Classes.

2. That Church Order, Article 43-a, be replaced with the following:

- a. Every classis shall maintain a Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.
- b. Every Classis, either individually, or in cooperation with other Classes, shall maintain a student fund to provide financial assistance to individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church other than by means of the residential or distance education program offered by Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS).
- c. That the current Article 43-b be designated as Article 43-c.

GROUND:

- 2.1 It supports the forgoing recommendation since the classes will no longer be required to financially support students enrolled in CTS.
 - 2.2 It will provide classes the authority to carry out the financial support ministry for individuals enrolled in seminaries other than CTS on their own, or to work together with another classis or classes, as is already the case in at least one instance.
3. That the cost of CTS providing the needs based financial assistance program be included into the CTS ministry shares effective for the 2017 calendar year.

GROUND:

- 3.1 The denominational Candidacy Committee has the student financial support information from the classes so that it will be able to advise synod as to by what amount the ministry share allocation for CTS should be raised.
- 3.2 As a result there should be no negative effect on the CTS budget as a consequence of implementing the proposed change.

APPENDIX #8.4 – OVERTURE FROM EBENEZER CRC, JARVIS

Overture from Ebenezer CRC: That Classis Hamilton re-evaluate their plan to fully fund Calvin Seminary Students tuition in US dollars by 100%, capping our annual Candidacy Committee contributions to \$40,000 Canadian. Priority would be given to fulfilling our existing commitments we have already made. Furthermore, we request that Classis Hamilton cease making multi-year commitments to students when classis only approves the budget one year at a time.

Grounds:

1. This current policy, despite the best of intentions to provide generous support and encourage attendance at Calvin Seminary, defeats the purpose of ministry shares. Instead of being given in a spirit of a gift to God for the growth of students in ministry to the service of the church, this takes on more of a billing that extends way beyond the Church Order that each classis maintains a student fund.
 2. Many churches are being forced to select between paying denominational vs. classical ministry shares as several churches are already unable to pay 100%.
 3. Classical commitment is being made regardless of the student's financial status or potential for scholarships and financial aid as confirmed by conversations with Calvin Seminary's Financial Aid Office. While not being able to provide names due to confidentiality, their office could confirm that a good number of Classis Hamilton students do receive scholarships and aid. To our knowledge, these are not taken into account when calculating our assistance.
 4. The newest policy to fund Calvin Seminary students by 100% has no ceiling in place and could continue to increase our commitment at the expense of funding other vital ministries – especially considering that with the added blessing of Redeemer University in our area, our number of students requesting support appears to be higher than other classis groups.
 5. Committing us to US Dollars is very unpredictable and ultimately will require ongoing calculations which make annual budgeting for our churches terribly difficult. Such is the case for the recent additional billing to cover commitment shortfalls.
 6. It is also troublesome, that multi-year commitments have been signed off on for students when classis only votes on an annual amount for approval. While it has been stated that this is required for the US Visa requirements, other classis groups in the past have funded their students who apply for annual visa renewals.
- The Council of Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis

APPENDIX #8.5 – OVERTURE FROM BETHEL CRC, WATERDOWN

Overture to Classis Hamilton – Regarding Classical Appointments

A. Introduction

The tradition of providing Classical Appointments – where the congregations within Classis who have pastors bless neighbouring congregations which are experiencing pastoral vacancy with the preaching and administration of the Sacraments of their pastors – is a much appreciated practice within the Christian Reformed Church.

We were quite surprised to discover that Classical Appointments are not mentioned in the Church Order, and that none of the handbooks or commentaries on the Christian Reformed Church Order has a single reference about it. Instead, Classical Appointments are part of our tradition, a time-honoured practice. With that being said, it is clear by the actions and previous decisions of Classis Hamilton that the manner in which the Classical Appointment process is administered allows freedom and flexibility to adapt the system as is deemed appropriate. Classis has much latitude, and we have come to see that modification of the system would make it better.

B. Background

The current Rules of Procedure of Classis Hamilton provides this guidance about Classical Appointments:

10.3 CLASSIS PULPIT SUPPLY

1. Churches without a minister shall be entitled to request Classis pulpit supply for two Sundays per month from September through May.
 - 1.1. A two-pastor congregation, with one vacancy will be allowed one Sunday per month.
 - 1.2. Congregations, who obtain the services of a full, or part-time stated-supply minister, may ask for one Sunday per month.
2. Ordinarily the Stated Clerk will maintain a list of retired ministers and other licentiates willing to help out on the Classis website.
3. A church whose minister is a synodical delegate shall be entitled to Classis pulpit supply for one Sunday while its minister attends Synod.
4. A church which receives Classis pulpit supply shall remunerate the church whose minister provides the service at the rate set by Classis and reviewed periodically. The travel expenses incurred by the guest minister as s/he fills the Classis appointment shall be paid directly to her/him by the church receiving his/her services, at a rate determined by Classis.
5. The Classis Interim Committee shall be responsible for preparing a pulpit supply schedule.

The Classical Interim Committee shares this information with those who receive the Classical Appointment schedule:

For Your Information

1. Classis provides pulpit supply two Sundays each month (ordinarily the 2nd and 4th) from September through May. There may be 2 services to fill.
2. Vacancies are filled by the church (not by the pastor as done in the past). The pastor must be a minister in good standing in the CRC.
3. The church will ordinarily send the pastor employed on staff. The sending church must convey in advance to the receiving church (with their agreement) which pastor will fill the vacant pulpit.
4. Services will be paid on a per service basis. Mileage (\$0.48 per km for 2014 and \$0.49 per km for 2015) will be paid to the pastor. One hundred dollars (\$100.00) per service will be sent to the sending church. (Note: Ancaster CRC has 2 morning services back-to-back.)
5. A two-pastor congregation, with one vacancy, will be allowed one Sunday per month.
6. Congregations who obtain the services of a full or part-time stated-supply minister may ask for one Sunday per month.

7. The congregations sending the Classis Hamilton synodical pastor delegates will receive a one Sunday service pulpit supply with all expenses paid by Classis. The four listed are in order of preference if they're not delegates!

8. If you need to make any changes, please arrange them yourselves. Remember to notify the churches and/or pastors involved of any changes.

C. Rationale for providing Classical Appointments to Congregations experiencing a Pastoral vacancy

In our contemplation of the practice of providing Classical Appointments, we have seen these as the likely reasons such as system came to be:

1. To help the congregations experiencing pastoral vacancy in the celebration of the Sacraments. In previous years, only ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacraments could officiate at baptisms and the Lord's Supper. Today, Commissioned Pastors may also officiate, but not those in other ordained offices.
2. To provide gospel proclamation through preaching during the time of public worship in the congregations experiencing pastoral vacancy, by someone suitably trained and authorized by the Christian Reformed Church.
3. To provide encouragement and to show solidarity with the churches which are without pastors.
4. To help congregations deepen their fellowship with other congregations in Classis, through the interaction between preacher and the congregation experiencing the pastoral vacancy.

D. Reasons for adjusting the current guidelines for Classical Appointments in Classis Hamilton

As good and noble as our intentions are in providing Classical Appointments in the present format, current realities make us believe that the guidelines should be adjusted:

1. There is a significant number of people who are Ministers of the Word who are available to preach and administer the Sacraments. The Classis Hamilton website gives the names of 17 ordained Ministers and Commissioned Pastors. Also, there are two people on the list who have licensure to exhort within this Classis.
2. Congregations who normally have two ministers but are temporarily without one of them still have access to the Sacraments through their remaining minister, and relief preaching is available from the 19 people on the list maintained by Classis.
3. Seven congregations in Classis Hamilton hold regular second services on Sundays, while nine others have alternative strategies to equip their people, which do not require preaching or the administration of the Sacraments.

Overture

Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Waterdown ON overtures Classis Hamilton:

That Classis Hamilton revise its policy regarding Classical Appointments to the following (underscore is an addition, strikeout is a deletion from the current guidelines):

CLASSIS PULPIT SUPPLY

1. Churches without a minister shall be entitled to request Classis pulpit supply for two Sundays per month from September through May, for their regularly scheduled morning service(s).

~~1.1. A two-pastor congregation, with one vacancy will be allowed one Sunday per month.~~

1.2. 1. Congregations, who obtain the services of a full, or part-time stated-supply minister, may ask for one Sunday per month, for their regularly scheduled morning service(s).

2. Ordinarily the Stated Clerk will maintain a list of retired ministers and other licentiates willing to help out on the Classis website.
3. A church whose minister is a synodical delegate shall be entitled to Classis pulpit supply for one Sunday (all services) while its minister attends Synod.
4. A church which receives Classis pulpit supply shall remunerate the church whose minister provides the service at the rate set by Classis and reviewed periodically. The travel expenses incurred by the guest minister as s/he fills the Classis appointment shall be paid directly to her/him by the church receiving his/her services, at a rate determined by Classis.
5. The Classis Interim Committee shall be responsible for preparing a pulpit supply schedule.

GROUND:

1. All of our congregations have morning worship services, but less than half have regularly scheduled afternoon or evening services in the traditional model.
2. Congregations with a pastor on staff have access to the Sacraments and sermons.
3. The multitude of ordained Ministers, Commissioned Pastors, and licensed exhorters shows that the needs of the churches, particularly those holding second services, can be well met.
4. Large congregations have resources to secure the services they require to fill their pulpits and prevent the remaining pastor from becoming overburdened.
5. Churches with a full time stated supply minister have a person able to preach and administer the sacraments. Thus the sending of other pastors to them is unwarranted. A part time stated supply minister means that part time (one per month) Classical Appointments are appropriate.
6. If a Minister attends Synod, it is right that Classis provides a Classical appointment for both the first and second services for the congregation without its pastor.

Respectfully submitted,


Peg VanderMeer
Clerk of Council
Bethel Christian Reformed Church
Waterdown, Ontario



APPENDIX #8.6 – PROPOSAL TO CANADIAN CLASSES FROM CHCC

August 19, 2015

Proposal toward a Unified Approach for Providing Financial Assistance to CRC Students at Canadian Seminaries Overview

The Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee (CHCC) has accepted the request by the Canadian Stated Clerks to develop a proposal that would work toward a unified student financial support approach across Canada and would find some traction for conversation at each classis.

The requirement to maintain a student fund and a Classical Ministries Leadership Team (CMLT) is found in *Church Order*, Article 43-a. The purpose of the fund is “to provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.” This was a new section added to the *Church Order* in 2010. Prior to Synod 2010, there was a widely accepted practice of Classical Student Funds, but it was based exclusively on long-standing practice. Nevertheless, unless Article 43-a is amended by a future synod, classes are bound to maintain a student fund for the stated purpose.

To begin with, the CHCC has decided to submit an overture to Classis Hamilton, asking it to overture Synod 2016 for the purpose of relieving the classes of the responsibility to provide financial support to students at Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS). A copy of the overture will be available to all Stated Clerks once the October agenda has been published. It is our view that the issue of financial support for students at CTS is quite separate and distinct from financial support for students at Canadian seminaries.

In discussions with members and councils in Classis Hamilton, we have become convinced that a unified approach across Canada needs to address two issues, namely, the quality of the seminaries education program from the perspective of Reformed worldview, confessions, Calvinist theology, and CRC church polity on the one hand and the financial assistance to be provided to students attending Canadian seminaries on the other hand. So in broad strokes the two issues to be addressed is first the need for and process of determining qualifying seminaries and second providing unified financial support for students attending qualifies seminaries.

A. Qualifying Seminaries

1. A qualifying seminary has to be accredited by a recognized accrediting agency. Not all institutions holding themselves out as seminaries are accredited.
2. Accreditation is given to qualifying seminaries based on academic criteria considered to be consistent with the seminary’s mission statement, i.e., its reason for existence. Such accreditation does not address the inherent bias of the educational program from the perspective of the mission statements of other seminaries. In that regard, the accrediting agencies attempt to be as ‘neutral’ as is humanly possible.
3. Every accredited seminary in Canada has a more or less unique mission statement. Some are closer to the Reformed perspective than others. The question to be addressed is whether a distinction should be made between the Canadian seminaries, not on academic criteria, but on criteria that are important for our purpose to encourage, mentor and support students to become well educated and well-rounded pastors in the CRC. A CRC pastor should be knowledgeable in the CRC worldview, confessions, theology and church polity. It is unlikely that the denominational Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) program will normally bring graduates of the EPMC program to the same knowledge level as students graduating from CTS.

4. If the foregoing statement finds agreement among the Canadian classes, it will require us to establish our own seminary ranking system. This could best be carried out by a committee of individuals, one appointed by each participating classis.

B. Financial Support for Students

1. It should be the goal of the Canadian classes to establish a national student financial support program for all students attending qualified Canadian seminaries. A national student financial support program can encourage students to seek the best Canadian seminary education available to them.
2. A national program would avoid significant annual fluctuations in student participation as is currently the case with the classical approach. Currently there are classes that have no students in Canadian seminaries while others have quite a few. A review of historical data shows that a seminary with no students in one year had a significant number a few years later and vice versa. For many classes this caused periodic budgetary stress situations.
3. A system of maximum needs-based awards would be established for each rank of qualifying seminaries. For example, a student entering a Rank 4 seminary might receive 80% of annual tuition and book costs; a student attending a Rank 3 seminary might receive 60%, etc.
4. A student awards committee elected from among the participating classical CMLT (or equivalent) committees would make decisions regarding all student awards.
5. It would be advisable to establish a funding pool administered by the Burlington CRC office to which all participating classes would remit their student support ministry shares.
6. The awards committee would need to determine whether the student awards should be in the form of forgivable loans or outright grants. Both systems are in place across Canada at the present time.

C. Recommendations

1. That the Canadian classes together establish a Canadian seminary ranking system based on the quality of education provided from the perspective of our own CRC criteria. These criteria, among possible others, could include knowledge of worldview, confessions, Calvinist theology, and exposure to CRC church polity. A seminary meeting all four criteria would have a rank of 4, one meeting three criteria would receive a rank of 3, etc.

FOUNDATIONS:

- a. The purpose of encouraging and mentoring individuals preparing for ministry in the CRC is to ensure that they enroll in seminaries that provide them with training as closely aligned to the mission and vision for pastors of the CRC as possible.
 - b. Determining qualified seminaries is more than ensuring that they have academic accreditation; it further involves ranking them on a continuum from closest aligned to farthest removed from the CRC mission and vision for ministry in the CRC.
2. That the further development and administration of the seminary ranking program as well as the student financial support decisions be carried out by a committee of one member elected by each participating classis from among members of their CMLTs or equivalent committees. Each member would serve for a four year term and not be eligible for re-election. One-third of the committee members would retire each year. The committee should have the name **Unified Canadian Student Support Committee (UCSSC)**. The committee could be established once three classes have agreed to join the unified program. Once a classis has decided to participate in the unified program, it should not be permitted to withdraw unless it gives three years notice of such a decision.

FOUNDATIONS:

- a. Joining the unified Canadian student support program should be voluntary for each classis, rather than requiring full participation of all classes at the outset. However, a minimum of three classes should make a decision to join prior to the unified program being established.
 - b. Since the members of the UCSSC should be closely connected to the CMLT (or equivalent committee) of each classis, and to ensure renewal while also having continuity, it is considered best to establish single four year committee membership terms.
 - c. To ensure stability of the unified fund, the UCSSC should not be exposed to the sudden financial support withdrawal of a classis that has previously voluntarily joined the unified program. The best way to accomplish stability is to agree to a three year withdrawal restriction.
3. That the CRC Ministry in Canada Office in Burlington be asked to administer the student financial support funding pool to which each of the participating classes would remit their respective ministry share collections for that purpose. The Burlington office would annually advise the UCSSC the funds that are available from the prior year.
GROUND:
 - a. The CRC Ministry in Canada Office exists to serve Canadian congregation and classis. It already has administrative services which can handle the financial administration of the UCSSC. There is no need to set up a separate administrative structure to administer the pooled funds designated for the UCSSC.
4. That the UCSSC be restricted from disbursing more funds than were collected in the prior year. It will be up to the UCSSC to determine how funds will be allocated in years that the standard criteria in Recommendation 1 cannot be achieved.
GROUND:
 - a. By restricting the UCSSC to disburse only those funds collected in the prior year, neither the CRC Ministry in Canada Office, nor the participating classes will be exposed to insufficient funds being available in any one year.
5. That the UCSSC advise each classis what the student financial support ministry shares should be for the next calendar year. To ensure that the participating classes are not exposed to budget surprises, the fluctuation in ministry share requests should not deviate by more than 10% from the prior year.
GROUND:
 - a. By notifying classes of the ministry share needs by the UCSSC one year in advance, the churches will have sufficient time to incorporate the unified student support funding requests in their respective budgets.
 - b. By limiting the ministry share deviation from the prior year to 10% (either increase or decrease) will encourage greater stability in classis budgets.
6. That each classis decides how to fund student financial support during the year of transition from their own program to the unified program in consultation with the UCSSC.
GROUND:
 - a. The UCSSC may not be able to fund students from a newly participating classis in the year that classis joins the program. For some classes this may not be a significant challenge since they have reserve funds for student financial support.

APPENDIX #9 - DELEGATE REPORTS:

APPENDIX #9.1 - BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



CALVIN
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Board of Trustees Report to Classis

Zone 4 - Classes Hamilton, Niagara, Huron and Chatham

Rev. Jeff Klingenberg, Hagersville Community CRC

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary, thank you for your support of your seminary community. There are a number of talking points that I would like to highlight for you and your congregations . . .

CTS BOARD IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

- Thankful to Hank Vanderlaan (London, ON) for his distinguished service to the CTS community. Hank has served for six years. Keith Oesthoek (Kitchener, ON) will be replacing Hank on the CTS board.
- I am thankful that CTS was also able to find a regional representative in Southern Ontario who will assist both Keith and myself in communication and donor support. We welcome Rev. Jake Kuipers to this role. Jake is already busy looking for opportunities in which CTS can build stronger links in Southern Ontario.
- In November, President Jul Medenblik will be coming to Southern Ontario and will be preaching in Grimsby and Hamilton.

CTS STUDENTS and FACULTY

- Commencement was held Saturday, May 23 – 106 Calvin Seminary graduates, including 36 Hispanic Ministry program graduates, and the first two Distance Learning students – Chad Van Ginkel and David Van Eyk.
- Calvin Seminary summer internships dispersed 57 seminarians – 21 Cross-Cultural internships, 24 Pastoral Ministry internships, 6 Clinical Pastoral education internships – as well as 6 Concurrent (part-time through the school year) Pastoral Ministry internships in both Canada and the U.S.
- Nepal earthquake – We hold in prayer the people of Nepal, and in particular three Nepali students at Calvin Seminary – Chudamani Koirala, Yakuv Gurung, and Ram Aryal – and their families, after the earthquakes decimated much of that region. In Nepal, both Koirala and Gurung have been pastors and lecturers at Evangelical Presbyterian Theological Seminary (EPTS) in Katmandu, Nepal, where two Calvin Seminary alumni, Revs. Arbin Pokharel and Troy Bierma serve. The third Student, Aryal, came to the U.S. as a college student, where he was converted to Christ from Hinduism, and now seeks training to fulfill a calling to be a pastor.
- Professor Cory Willson was appointed by the Calvin Seminary Board of Trustees and approved by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to serve as the Jake and Betsy Tuls Assistant Professor of Missiology and Missional Ministry. He also serves as Director of the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal. He has already moved into his office and begins teaching this Fall.
- Prof. Matthew Tuininga was appointed by the Calvin Seminary Board of Trustees and approved by the Synod of the CRC to serve as Assistant Professor of Moral Theology, beginning in 2016-17. He is scheduled to teach a distance course in ethics during Spring 2016.
- Prof. Jeff Weima, Professor of New Testament, presented on preaching to a group of motivated evangelical pastors in Padua, Italy this past July. Weima admired the energy and passion of the attendees – many of whom are employed in full-time work outside of ministry – and noted the challenges evangelicalism faces in Italy as a relatively new movement in a predominantly Catholic country. The

adjunct professor of Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione expressed the institution's ongoing interest in cultivating a relationship with Calvin Seminary.

- John Witvliet, Professor at Calvin Seminary and Director of the Institute for Christian Worship, was recently surprised to receive 2015 Jubilate Deo award, which is given annually for significant contributions to Catholic worship. Witvliet expressed gratitude for the generous ecumenism shown in granting such an award to a reformed theologian and suggested Protestants and Catholics have much to learn from each other to participate in worship that is both expressive and formative.
- This past spring and summer, President Medenblik was able to travel to Korea and China:
 - **Travel to Korea:** May 4-13, 2015: President Medenblik visited Calvin University and Seminary, Korea Theological Seminary, Baekseok University, Hapdong Theological Seminary, Han Young Theological University and Seminary, and Chongshin University and Seminary. He visited and preached at churches there including Flowergarden Presbyterian Church, Cheongnyang Presbyterian Church (*pastored by the father of a current Calvin Seminary student and his wife who is also a Calvin Seminary student*), and The Korean Christian Council of World. Jul also thanks Rev. Christian Oh of Han-Bit Korean Christian Reformed Church who joined him on this trip (and the other three) as guide, interpreter, and brother in Christ.
 - **Travel to Indonesia:** August 6-17, 2015: President Medenblik led a Leadership seminar to students and pastors, presented a meditation to graduates at a retreat and delivered the commencement message at the 45th Anniversary of Aletheia Seminary. He connected with other ministries and schools; interviewed at a worship service of the Reformed Evangelical Church of Indonesia (*Senior Pastor Joseph Tong*), connected with International Reformed Evangelical Seminary (*Dr. Benyamin Intan*) and visited Southeast Asia Bible Seminary (*Dr. Martus Maleachi – also a Calvin Seminary graduate*).

CTS PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

- Distance Learning:
 - Introduced Distance MA starting this fall
 - Streamlined intensives for distance learners to reduce number of days needing to be at the Seminary
 - Celebrated our first two distance learning M.Div. graduates in May, 2015
 - See back cover ad in September Banner
- Church Renewal Lab (CRL)
 - First cohort of 13 churches completed their 2-year journey of 8 quarterly, sequential church renewal learning laboratories
 - CRL begins in New Jersey as part of the seminary pilot
 - Rev. Keith Doornbos, who was serving part-time, has begun serving full-time as Project Director of the Church Renewal Lab, which is one of the initiatives of the Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal.
- Hispanic Ministry Certificate program: first cohort of 36 certificate students graduated at Commencement held May 23, 2015; Rev. Rodrigo Cano, a recent graduate of our new Certificate in Hispanic Ministry Program, has been appointed to serve part-time as Administrative Assistant for this program. He, along with 5 other certificate graduates, have enrolled in degree programs at Calvin Seminary.
- Calvin Prison Initiative—partnership with Calvin College; MDOC requested; Calvin Prison Initiative – Professors Christiana de Groot and Todd Cioffi of Calvin College have been appointed as Co-Directors of the Calvin Prison Initiative, a joint program of Calvin College and Calvin Seminary, now is seeking final

accreditation approval to offer certificate, A.A., and B.A. programs with a focus in ministry studies to people in a nearby prison. The first courses have already begun. The degrees will be awarded by Calvin College. The committee overseeing this project consists of faculty from Calvin College and Calvin Seminary.

- Facing your Future is a seminary program that gathers young people (entering 1st year of high school or first year of college) for three weeks of ministry exploration and formation. We just completed our 17th year and were delighted to welcome 29 students from the U.S. and Canada this past July.
- China—we continue to see our enrollment of Chinese students grow as does our engagement with issues of Christianity's growth within China.
 - The Seminary hosted a China delegation of Chinese Christian pastors and theologians in April
 - Within CRCNA agencies including Calvin College, we continue to participate in collaborative conversations about the church in China and how we can together help to serve its needs.
- Upcoming Events—see the September **Banner** for more information (p.3)
 - Celebrating the NIV at 50; October 8 & 9, 2015 – On October 8 and 9, Calvin Seminary will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the NIV – a biblical translation envisioned by a Christian Reformed Church member. Michael Williams, professor of Old Testament, continues the tradition of Calvin Seminary's investment in the NIV by serving on the ecumenical translation team as both translator and secretary.
 - The Stob Lectures featuring Dr. Sarah Coakley, November 11 & 12, 2015
 - Missional Living of Scripture Conference November 18 & 19, 2015

CTS DEVELOPMENT

- \$1.25 million goal for annual formation fund met, up from \$881,630 the year before! We are deeply grateful for the faithful churches and individuals who invest their stewardship dollars in training and forming ministry leaders for Christ's church.
- We continue to seek new scholarship support for the women and men God is calling to serve the church and who desire to be formed for ministry at Calvin Seminary.

Please continue praying for Calvin Theological Seminary...

- Beginning our 140th academic year of study, welcoming students from around the world who have chosen Calvin Seminary for its biblical and theological depth of study
- The search for Director of Vocational Discernment (formerly Mentored Ministries) currently underway
- The search for a Gift Officer & Annual Fund leader (one position) currently underway

APPENDIX #10 - MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

APPENDIX #10.1 - WORLD RENEW



Fall 2015 Report to Classis Hamilton

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Associate Director of Church Relations

First of all, thanks to the churches of Classis Hamilton for your unflagging support of the work of World Renew. Through your assistance, this agency has been able to transform more than 1 million lives through disaster response, development and justice programs. In a recent year, the churches of Classis Hamilton donated \$412,183.00 (not including individual donations); during May and June of this year alone, \$106,384.00 was donated by the churches of Classis Hamilton. Many of those funds were designated for World Renew's work in Nepal in earthquake disaster response. You have blessed many people through your loving kindness. THANKS! I also want to thank the 4 Ambassadors of the 17 churches in this Classis, as well as Ed Scharringa, the impassioned delegate on the World Renew Board of Delegates, and Jason DeBoer, the newly-minted ardent member-at-large in this Classis, for all of their activity in support of the work of World Renew.

A. Staff Changes

- *Maria Oliveira*, the Church Relations' team's wonderful **Constituency Relations Associate**, will have begun her maternity leave as of Aug. 28 (her last day). Her replacement is being sought. She is already being missed!
- *Amanda Bakale*, the **Ministry Partner Program's (MPP) Coordinator** has moved across to congregational leadership in a Kitchener CRC. Her replacement is being sought. She too is already being missed.
- As you undoubtedly have heard through THE BANNER and other media, the search for a **US Director** to replace *Andy Ryskamp* is complete: *Carol Bremer-Bennet* has taken the position, starting as of Aug. 1, 2015
- World Renew has hired *Melody Mendonca* as our **Advocacy Manager** who will assist the churches in encouraging our federal government to help small farmers in developing countries.
- We are searching for a part-time assistant for the **Refugee** office.

B. Important Dates and Publications

The Synod of the CRCNA has designated these offerings in the churches for the remainder of 2015. For more information and resources, please visit worldrenew.net/churchresources.

- **October 11 or 12: Thanksgiving** – Offering for World Renew's Free A Family[®] program. Bulletin inserts will be sent to churches. The Free A Family[®] program is an alternative to sponsorship based on community development.
- **October 18 to November 1: World Hunger Campaign** – A two week campaign culminating in an offering for World Hunger on November 1. Resources have already been sent to the churches of Classis Hamilton, including a family devotional, adult devotional, bulletin inserts/covers, and a leader's guide containing a drama script, song suggestions, children's message, sermon and more. The focus this year is the 20th anniversary of the Peter Fish.

- **November/December: Gift Catalog Campaign** – Gift catalogs will be distributed as well as resources to set-up a giving tree campaign in your church.
- **December 25: Christmas Day** – Offering for World Renew, which could be a culmination of the church's Gift Catalog campaign. Bulletin inserts/covers are available for order.

C. Community Development: Stories of Transformation

There are so many communities experiencing God's love, grace and abundance through the work of World Renew. Please check out our website, and you will be inspired by what God is doing through World Renew. Learn about broiler chickens in Honduras; drought response in Zambia; food security in Cambodia; psycho-spiritual conferences for displaced and traumatized women in Northern Iraq. These are all stories of need, and of hope revived; all stories of God, who is enabling World Renew to "punch above its weight". Thanks, Hamilton!

D. Disaster Response: North America and International

High River, Alberta: World Renew DRS is in the process of finalizing home reconstruction projects in preparation for closing the High River site this fall. From June, 2013 – May, 2015, 395 volunteers have worked in High River, spending 47,819 hours on delivering hope; they have (re-)built 36 homes, with 15 still in progress. Today, High River is in the process of constructing an extensive diking system to prevent another flood from happening in southern Alberta in the future. "The dikes and berms have been built one metre above the crest of the 2013 flood", says Sarah Bruinsma, a case manager for World Renew DRS in High River. "The system provides a much-needed sense of security for many High River residents."

Ebola Crisis, West Africa: By the end of July, World Renew's response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa was concluded. Classis Hamilton helped raise the \$859,490.00 that was spent on stemming the spread of this deadly epidemic. Clinics were resourced; triage units were built; health education was communicated. All of this was possible because World Renew already had many relationships in many communities, and was therefore a trusted agency. We thank God that the spread of this disease has been effectively halted, and we now pray that the families and communities are able to rebuild.

Nepal Earthquake of April 25, 2015: After the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that left 8,844 people dead and almost 900,000 houses destroyed or severely damaged, World Renew began to work in specifically designated areas to offer food assistance, plastic buckets, hygiene kits, blankets and basic shelter-building equipment. Careful monitoring and prayerful collaboration with other disaster response agencies, and the incredible outpouring of loving gifts from God's people, including folks from Classis Hamilton, have allowed God's grace to flow into these communities. Several international Relief Managers (IRMs), like the Bergshoeffs (Ontario) and the Hoyers (BC) have assisted the work of World Renew in Nepal.

E. Sea to Sea Rides, summer, 2015

Both "Sea to Sea" rides are now complete. The Sea to Sea East tour ran from June 29 to July 4 beginning and ending at Redeemer University College. The Sea to Sea West tour ran from July 29 to August 8 beginning in Jasper, Alberta and ending in Glacier National Park, Montana. The eastern tour had 26 riders, and the western tour boasted 41 riders. In total (as of Aug. 10, 2015), the rides brought in \$243,000.00, of which \$72,900.00 will be donated to World Renew which helped to sponsor the rides. *Partners Worldwide* and the *International Justice Mission (IJM)* co-sponsored the rides. We thank all those who rode in these tours, especially the riders from Classis Hamilton.

F. Refugee Settlement Activities

The World Renew Refugee office has assisted in the arrival of 57 refugees from Jan. /15 to the present. It has also submitted 21 applications (35 people) during that time. Another 17 Blended Visa Office Referred Program (BVOR) applications have been submitted as well. **DEACONS!** A new 90-minute interactive workshop video is available from the Refugee office: "Journey with Me". Another video will be available from the Burlington CRCNA office in September, promoting support for the refugee crisis in the Middle East. For more information, contact Rebecca Walker at 800-730-3490 ext. 4232 or rwalker@worldrenew.net or visit www.worldrenew.net/refugeesponsorship.

G. World Renew Strategic Plan: 2015-2018

Every organization requires careful and thoughtful reflection on its past, and planning for its future. World Renew is no exception. We constantly monitor our activities, and compare them to (defined, expected) results. We also prayerfully think ahead, and define the products and processes (because “if you don’t know where you’re going, you might end up somewhere else”). The three strategic directions that will focus World Renew’s activities for the next years are:

1. Engage and equip our global network of churches and Christian partner organizations in learning and action that contribute to the transformation of communities worldwide.
2. Work proactively for justice in World Renew’s programming—with constituencies, partner organizations, local communities and within World Renew itself.
3. Increase resilience in communities by enhancing their capacity to prepare for and respond to shocks, trends and seasonality such as disaster events and climate change.

H. Prayer Requests for Classis Hamilton:

-pray for Ebola orphans; for staff working in various regions, offering hope; for Carol Bremer-Bennet as she begins to settle into her new role as US Director.

I. What (Else) Can Classis Hamilton Churches Do:

-sponsor a refugee (family); ensure there are offerings scheduled on the dates noted above; volunteer at a DRS site; consider sending someone to an IDR training seminar; encourage your congregation to get involved in the GVP Program; contact Peter Bulthuis (pbulthuis@worldrenew.net; 800-730-3490, ext. 4237) for more ideas.

To learn more about World Renew’s ministry, please visit worldrenew.net and sign up for our e-newsletter.

Blessings; Peter Bulthuis.

**REDEEMER**
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



FALL 2015: CLASSIS HAMILTON

Greetings to you, Classis Hamilton, from Redeemer University College! We are pleased to be able to share with our partners in ministry some of what is happening at Redeemer.

And there is much to share. As we begin 2015-16, Redeemer has launched a number of initiatives in marketing and recruitment, program development and digital infrastructure. We are confident that these changes will enable Redeemer to better meet enrolment targets in years to come. Already the number of students coming to Redeemer this Fall directly out of high school is increased from last year.

From Classis Hamilton, we are expecting 41 students to attend Redeemer this fall. Thanks for your work in encouraging them to consider us

Redeemer is also pleased to roll out a new program this fall. Media and Communication Studies will see students—through both theory and practice—learn to engage, critique and transform contemporary media. This is a program that students have been asking for, and it will equip and enable them to be Christian influences on the front lines of today's culture.

We are also excited to launch the Centre for Experiential Learning and Career Development this fall. The Centre will enhance hands-on learning across all academic programs and equip students to discover their calling after graduation.

You can learn more about these and other new initiatives on our new website. The new redeemer.ca will be live on September 1. Through it, we hope to better tell Redeemer's story to prospective students, supporters and the broader community.

COMING EVENTS

Redeemer is hosting a number of events this fall that may be of interest to you, your ministry staff and your congregation. For more on each, please visit the website.

SEPTEMBER 26:
Refresh and Renew, Redeemer's 8th annual Worship Conference featuring Carolyn Arends.

OCTOBER 28-30:
Purpose, Power, Potential. Co-sponsored by Redeemer's Centre for Christian Scholarship and Edifide, this conference hosts landmark speakers and thinkers contributing to faith in our public life.

CHURCH IN THE BOX (CITB)
A student-led ministry uniting the Redeemer community and surrounding area in worship. These monthly Sunday evening services start at 7:00 pm in Redeemer's Auditorium. All are welcome to attend, and a special invitation is extended to church youth groups. Scheduled services include October 18 and November 15.



I can't say enough about my education at Redeemer. I feel blessed to have been able to engage with the church I've worked at this summer and use the gifts given to me by my education to further the summer programming they've created here. I don't think I will ever stop benefiting from the way I've been seeped at Redeemer with a Christian worldview that is solid and firm.

Helena Schuurman (Immanuel CRC, Hamilton) spent part of her summer working as the director of a children's camp. The pastor of that church "can't say enough about the RUC students he has met;" in fact, he wants to establish ministry placement opportunities based on these experiences. Helena is an example of the rich community of service-minded students at Redeemer.

APPENDIX #10.3 – DENOMINATIONAL CANDIDACY COMMITTEE



August 2015

Dear Friends,

It is our practice as a candidacy committee to occasionally review the student fund practices of classes in our denominations. Our goal is to keep before us the needs of students and the task of raising up leaders for our churches. This report is being sent to the student fund committees, CMLT's and classis clerks across the CRCNA. Please feel free to share it with whomever you wish, and use it to prompt prayerful reflection regarding our student fund practices.

If you would like to see the data for your classis, and the data behind this most recent student aid report, please send us a request via email. We'll be glad to share it with you; edited to remove the identifying names of the other classes while identifying yours.

Student Fund Data: *A summary report prepared in the summer of 2015*

Year of Data	2008	2010	2012	2014
# of Classis:				
Providing complete data	26	36	37	34
Providing partial data	10	4	4	9
Providing no data:	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
Total # of classes	47	47	47	48
Average \$ per member (range of lowest-highest within reporting classes)	\$5.73 (\$.31 lowest) (\$15.32 highest)	\$4.44 (\$.78 lowest) (\$9.73 highest)	\$5.94 (\$.12 lowest) (\$15.98 highest)	\$5.60 (\$.91 lowest) (\$14.58 highest)
\$ of Student Fund Aid:				
\$ reported as given (a)	\$488,596	\$609,804	\$719,709	\$629,541
\$ reported in budget (b)	<u>\$119,139</u>	<u>\$ 93,475</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>	<u>\$119,000</u>
\$ Projected total (c)	\$607,735	\$703,279	\$819,709	\$748,541
TL # of students shown in Data	113	133	145	146
Average \$ per student (range of lowest to highest in reporting classes)	\$4525 (\$500 lowest) (\$15,000 highest)	\$4566 (\$500 lowest) (\$15,500 highest)	\$5009 (\$500 lowest) (\$15,299 highest)	\$4663 (\$300 lowest) (\$16,884 highest)

Notes regarding methodology in collecting data:

1. The 2014 data represents a survey of data gathered from classis minutes, plus data gathered from personal contact with classis representatives in classes where data did not appear in their minutes.
2. The data for 2008, 2010, and 2012 was gathered from past studies, reviewed for this study, and in some cases represents different figures than previously announced, in order to keep the methodology consistent from year to year.
3. The dollars reported as given (row "a", in bold) is the total of all grants reported from the classes providing such data. To this number is added an amount reported in the classis budget (row "b" in the boxes reporting \$ of student fund aid) from the classes

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Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407
616-241-1691
616-224-5895 fax

www.crcna.org

3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington ON L7R 3Y8
905-336-2920
905-336-8344 fax

where we have no data for \$ actually given but do have data regarding amounts budgeted for student aid. The larger number (row "c" in the boxes reporting \$ of student fund aid) indicates the likely total of funds given in the given year for student aid. In reality, the number may be higher still, as there are a number of classes which provide no data at all.

Observations:

1. It is a real joy to be able to record and note the generosity of our churches and classes relative to supporting those being trained for ordained ministry in the CRCNA. In the most recently chronicled giving cycle, \$629,541 has been reported as given for student aid, with an actual total likely more than \$748,000.
2. At least 146 persons are currently receiving student fund aid, meaning that we have a substantial number of men and women who are preparing to enter vocational ministry. (There are actually more than 146, as it is likely that not all who are preparing are receiving financial aid from our classes.) This number of persons preparing for ministry is a cause for rejoicing, as our Lord's prayer for harvest workers continues to be answered by this current generation.
3. Many significant questions are before us as we consider the implications of this data:
 - *Are the students and the churches who will enlist their services ready to handle the debt load that has become part of being educated in this current era? (Many students have a debt load of more than \$30,000 as they finish their seminary studies, and they typically enter ministry positions which have salaries that make such debt repayment a budgetary challenge.)*
 - *Are there ways we can encourage classes to work together in supporting students, so as to make use of the surplus of funds in some classes, address the limited funding in other classes, and even out the disparity among students regarding the student aid they receive?*
 - *Are students feeling the support of the church, and are they also receiving wise counsel regarding the potential debt load, and regarding the need to consider "tent-making" ministries and other innovative ways of finding financial support once they enter vocational ministry.*
 - *How many students, beyond the 146 persons reported, are currently in the "pipeline" leading toward candidacy for Minister of the Word in the CRCNA?*
 - *What seminaries are students attending besides Calvin Seminary, and how can our classes encourage attendance at Calvin Seminary while also honoring the decision to attend a different seminary? (How can our classis teams and local churches walk more closely with students as they engage in studies preparing them for vocational ministry?)*

The candidacy committee is considering these questions, and many others. We covet your prayers, your partnership and your suggestions as we work together to facilitate a process that will prepare men and women for ministry in the real world. In the coming months we will be building a database of those preparing for vocational ministry as we move toward the "24 month candidacy journey" that synod 2015 approved. The assistance of classis student fund teams and CMLTs will be essential as we prepare for this deeper support of potential candidates beyond financial aid.

Thank you once again for your consideration of this matter.
In HIS Service,



David R Koll
On behalf of the Candidacy Committee
dkoll@crcna.org

APPENDIX #10.4 – CANADIAN CLASSES MINISTRY SHARE COMPARISONS

Classis Ministry Share Analysis for the Canadian Classes for 1015

	Alberta North	Alberta South	BCNW	BCSE	Chatham	Eastern Canada	Hamilton	Huron	Lake Superior	Niagara	Quinte	Toronto	Average
	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)	(per member)
Classis Services	9.05	8.27	13.85	10.99	6.00	16.49	11.80	12.82	16.00	1.00	8.59	12.38	10.60
Student Fund	6.98	6.45	10.00	7.08	7.00	-	10.90	10.03	5.65	1.71	13.50	4.11	6.95
Campus Ministries	19.02	41.78	15.00	12.81	33.00	18.88	26.30	34.62	-	34.09	23.14	55.89	26.21
Classis Home Missions	10.93	0.83	9.00	6.37	10.00	21.15	-	7.80	-	11.04	8.91	4.30	7.53
Youth Ministries	20.53	1.86	-	-	16.65	4.53	0.54	-	-	-	0.68	0.95	3.81
Other	28.18	7.02	15.45	15.88	-	14.58	14.29	0.44	40.60	19.99	13.59	0.16	14.18
	94.69	66.21	63.30	53.13	72.65	75.63	63.83	65.71	62.25	67.83	68.41	77.79	69.29
Rank All - (high to low)	1	7	10	12	4	3	9	8	11	6	5	2	
Classis Services Rank	8	10	3	7	11	1	6	4	2	12	9	5	
Student Fund Rank	7	8	4	5	6	12	2	3	9	11	1	10	
Campus Ministry Rank	8	2	10	11	5	9	6	3	12	4	7	1	
Home Missions Rank	3	10	5	8	4	1	11	7	11	2	6	9	
Youth Ministries	1	4	8	8	2	3	7	8	8	8	6	5	
Other	3	9	5	4	12	6	7	10	1	2	8	11	

Classis Handout for 2015-16

Dear Classis Participants,

In my time spent with you at Classis I wish to discuss some of the significant resources, tools and responses that we have been working on in the Canadian Ministry Office. Below you will find links to some of those resources which may also be available in print form at the Classis meeting itself.

As well, you will find a handout about the Emerging Ministry Plan that we will be working through at the Classis meeting in small groups. We also hope that the conversation about the CRC Ministry Plan makes it into your churches. More to come at the meeting...

Contents:

1. Ministry Plan Handout Attached (to be used in conjunction with local churches)
2. Web link to /Canada page: <http://www.crcna.org/Canada>
3. Refugee Response Link (resources and video): <http://www.crcna.org/Canada/social-justice-canada/refugee-issues>
4. Canadian Ministry Directory:
http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/ministry_in_canada_directory_-_august_2015.pdf
5. Other CDN projects:
 - a. Youth Ministry Pilot Project
 - b. Denominational service practices with Classis Niagara Pilot
 - c. Preparing for Synod 2015: Doctrine of Discovery and the Blanket Exercise

THE EMERGING MINISTRY PLAN OF THE CRCNA: Possibilities for Congregations

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

***Desired future #1:** Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church participate with each other and with their local communities to discern where the Spirit is working and to bear witness to Christ's presence.*

Strategic Focus 1.1 Congregations discover and discern how God is at work in their churches and communities, bringing renewal and transformation.

Step 1.1.1: Congregations assess their community assets, ministries and opportunities.

Step 1.1.2: Congregations design experiments and develop plans and strategies that will enhance ministry contextualization and renewal.

Strategic Focus 1.2: Ministry leaders,¹ both ordained and lay, discover and discern how God is at work in their communities, resulting in the birth of new churches and discipling communities.

Step 1.2.1: Ministry leaders and groups assess the assets, ministries and opportunities in their local communities.

Step 1.2.2: Leaders emerge from within local contexts to start new churches and discipling communities.

DISCIPLESHIP

***Desired future #2:** Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church are vibrant, grace-shaped communities engaged in lifelong discipleship with those of all generations.*

Strategic Focus 2.1: Congregations are shaped by grace.

Step 2.1.1: Congregations affirm that all that they are and do flows from grace, which defines every dimension of congregational life: culture, worship, discipleship, the ways ministry is structured, pastoral care, the ways power is exercised, etc.

Strategic Focus 2.2: Congregations are places where all generations find spiritual homes and grow in belonging and maturity.

Step 2.2.1: Congregations sign up for the project and use its tools to assess, discern and strengthen practices whose fruit is belonging and maturity.

Strategic Focus 2.3: Congregations discern God's call within their unique identities and contexts, giving rise to strong and creative discipleship practices and a broad range of resources.

Step 2.3.1: Congregations become aware of the faith formation resources available through a combination of regional workshops, interactions with regional personnel and denomination-wide communication and make discerning use of these resources.

Strategic Focus 2.4: Congregations engage children, youth and young adults in the life of the church.

¹ Ministry leaders, ordained and lay, may be serving in existing congregations or connected in clusters, or may be individuals who have a very clear call to planting.

Step 2.4.1: Congregational leaders engaged in youth and young adult ministry assist in developing and implementing an infrastructure to support these areas of ministry.
2.4.2: Five congregations in West Michigan participate in a joint CRC/RCA project called “Generation Spark,” whose purpose is to partner young adults with seniors so that together they provide focused ministry leadership.
2.4.3: NOTE: This step will not immediately impact congregations, as young adult ministry is complex and requires discernment work to be undertaken first.

Strategic Focus 2.5: Congregations are characterized by vibrant worship that engages people of all ages.
Step 2.5.1 Congregations have opportunities to grow, relearn preaching, incorporate testimony, re-imagine/retool the use of creeds and confessions, and teach fundamentals of worship.

LEADERSHIP

Desired future #3: Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church are places where clergy and lay leaders are developed, trained and empowered to lead effectively in today’s diverse and challenging contexts.

Strategic Focus 3.1 Congregations and ministries discover, understand and respond to leadership needs in ways that meet their local contexts.
Step 3.1.1: Congregations identify and understand their need for various leadership skill sets.
Step 3.1.2: Congregations identify opportunities for development of current leaders, as well as new leadership positions unique to their context, and prepare specific implementation plans.
Step 3.1.3: Congregations enable individuals to discern God’s call to leadership in ways that honor their diversity (e.g., ability, multicultural-racial, socio-economic status, language, age, and gender) and include both ordained and lay leaders in ministry service.

Strategic Focus 3.2 Congregations and ministries are characterized by Spirit-filled leaders who have the skills to minister in their local contexts, both internal and external.
Step 3.2.1 PASTORS: (A) Congregations allow and encourage pastors to continue to develop holistically as leaders, always understood and expressed in contextual ways. (B) Congregations, in consultation with their pastors, evaluate existing skills and design or create annual development plans for their ordained clergy.
Step 3.2.2 LAY LEADERS: (A) Congregations encourage and empower lay leaders to develop holistically as leaders, always understood and expressed in contextual ways. (B) Congregations evaluate existing skills and design or create a development plan for their lay leaders. This development plan is evaluated and augmented annually, based on individual needs.
Step 3.2.3: Council members are equipped to evaluate leaders.

Strategic Focus 3.3 Congregations and ministries participate in leadership development efforts in mutually beneficial partnership throughout the world.
Step 3.3.1: Congregations identify and participate in global leadership development efforts as appropriate in their contexts (e.g., local university chaplaincy, mission support of global Christian universities, volunteer faculty assignments, etc.)

Step 3.3.2: Congregations identify and participate in global leadership developments appropriate for the mission efforts they support.

Strategic Focus 3.4 Congregations and ministries create opportunities for women, racial-ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and young adults to discover and develop their leadership gifts and callings.

Step 3.4.1: Congregations develop, implement and share tools and programs especially for women and young adults, as well as tools and programs aimed at identifying and developing leadership gifts.

3.4.2: Congregations select and implement tools and programs especially for members of racial-ethnic minorities and those with disabilities, as well as tools and programs aimed at identifying and developing leadership gifts.

IDENTITY

Desired future # 4: Congregations and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand deeply, embrace fully and express freely what it means to be a part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Strategic Focus 4.1: Congregations and ministries develop ways to deepen our understanding of our shared identity as the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Step 4.1.1: Delegates to synod have the opportunity to engage in various learning sessions while at synod.

Step 4.1.2: Congregations are offered materials that build a sense of Christian Reformed identity in conjunction with specific events.

Strategic Focus 4.2: Congregations, ministries and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand, embrace and express our identity as part of Christ's church worldwide.

Step 4.2.1: Congregations and members express in clear and simple language what it means to be a part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America in the 21st century.²

Step 4.2.2: Congregations and colleges are encouraged to select a day in an identified span of time as part of a denomination-wide Day of Service and to identify community partners as well as intended participants (youth, intergenerational, etc.).

(Note: This seeks the same kind of unifying effect as the Sea to Sea rides.)

Step 4.2.3: Congregations send leaders, ordained and lay, to various gatherings that provide learning, sharing, and celebrating opportunities geared to a variety of interests and levels.

² This process should include within its scope a consideration of accompanying visual representations and use of the words *binational* and *international*.

Strategic Focus 4.3: Congregations, ministries and members understand, embrace and express our identity as a diverse church gathered from "every nation, tribe and tongue."

Step 4.3.1: Congregations that are not yet or only emerging as multi-ethnic churches use training and resources to further their journey toward becoming multi-ethnic.

Step 4.3.2: Ethnic minority members of the CRCNA use collaborative tables and dedicated personnel to provide continuous feedback on progress for all levels of the denomination.

Step 4.3.3: Ecumenical relationships, when appropriate, give rise to the presence of the CRCNA (or a new category of CRC-partner denominations) in countries other than Canada and the U.S.

Strategic Focus 4.4: Congregations, ministries and members respond to the call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly" with God.

Step 4.4.1: Congregations identify and set goals to address social justice issues that are affecting their local context and one affecting global partnerships.
Step 4.4.2: Congregations engage in active citizenship that encourages them and their leaders to be accountable for developing and implementing just policies.

COLLABORATION

Desired future #5: Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church interact together in ways that are effective, efficient, responsive, cross-culturally competent, easily accessible and sustainable.

Strategic Focus 5.1: Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church develop new ways of working together at all levels – local, regional, national and binational – that are effective, efficient, responsive, clear and sustainable.

Step 5.1.1: Congregations and classes participate in pilot projects so that together we learn how new delivery systems can emerge in ways that meet the goals of this strategic focus (efficiency, responsiveness, etc.).

Step 5.1.2: Congregations participate in healthy classes that serve church polity purposes as well as provide mutual support, continuing education, strengthening opportunities for established churches, and an impetus for new church development.

Strategic Focus 5.2: The Christian Reformed Church develops new ways of connecting congregations with the denominational services they need, as well as increased opportunities to participate in mission outreach, in a way that generates greater efficiency, accessibility, cross-cultural competence, clarity and sustainability.

Step 5.2.1: Congregations make use of channels for communication with denominational services that (a) reflect and make accessible the five-stream metaphor and (b) recognize that congregations are led by paid staff and volunteers as well as pastors and office-bearers.

Step 5.2.2: Congregations participate in the funding of denominational services and shared ministries in ways that are sustainable and that demonstrate broad ownership and alignment with congregational priorities.