

Report from Synod, Wednesday June 13, 2012

Wednesday morning synod began its work at 8:00 AM. Ordinarily, according to the Rules of Synod, the start time is 8:30 AM, but on Tuesday the synod decided to start its sessions at 8. After Rev. Spronk had opened in prayer, Synod returned to the oral examination of Bro. Vernon Ibe. Vernon was examined for 2 hours by Prof. Cammenga in Theology under its six main headings/divisions - Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology. The brother demonstrated a commitment to and thorough understanding of Reformed theology. Part of the joy of an examination at Synod is that visitors are present. Visitors present at Synod include Vernon's wife, Melody, some friends from Michigan, visitors including children from the area churches in IL, and a group of visitors from Singapore.

Synod decided to give Bro. Ibe a break for the remainder of the morning and turned to the work of committee three regarding a sister church relationship with the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (CERCS). Last year Synod decided to establish a sister church relationship with the CERCS, provided our denomination's other sister church, the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland (CPRCNI) had no objections to this. The CPRCNI had informed us that they had no objections and so synod, today, approved the implementation of this sister relationship. A part of the joy of doing this work today was the presence of Deacon Chan and his wife from the CERCS, as well as the group of young people from Singapore. Deacon Chan addressed Synod, expressing joy and thanksgiving to God for our ongoing relationship and the help that the PRC has given over the years. We rejoice in this decision as an answer to prayers, and as God's blessing on the fruit of decades of labor.

After the lunch hour, Synod returned to the oral examination, Bro. Ibe being examined by Prof. Dykstra in his knowledge of our confessions, Prof. Gritters in his knowledge of the church order, and Rev. VanOverloop in *practica* - practical aspects of the gospel ministry. Again the brother gave a good account of himself, and a wonderful confession of the work of God's grace in his life that has brought him to this point. In closed session the synod unanimously approved the examination of Bro. Vernon Ibe and recommended him to the Berean PRC for a call to the gospel ministry. The announcement of this decision after closed session is ended is always a great moment of joy and thanksgiving. After the announcement synod sang praise to God and prayed together, and then the Ibe's were personally congratulated by each of the delegates and the visitors. We give thanks to God for the gift of Bro. Ibe, and pray that the Lord will bless him and his family, and use him mightily for the spread of the gospel. We rejoice with the Berean PRC and the saints in the Philippines as the Ibes return to labor there.

Synod approved the sending of a Minister On Loan (MOL) to assist the CERCS in their present need without a pastor. Grandville PRC was appointed the calling church. Initially the MOL will labor for two years giving the session of the CERCS opportunity to work through immigration and financial issues. This arrangement will also give all parties involved to determine the MOL's suitability for laboring in that foreign culture on a permanent basis. Synod also authorized the Contact Committee to obtain and send ministers to preach and teach in the CERCS until a MOL is in Singapore, the Lord Willing.

Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) material was also treated today. The work in Pittsburgh continues, with God's blessing, and Synod expressed its thanks to the Bruinsmas and Southwest PRC for their labors. At present there is no Western Home Missionary in the PRC, but Synod did approve the work of the DMC in investigating new fields in the Western USA. Colored flyers of our mission work are produced biannually by the DMC with the help of AIM. Per the decision of 2011, the website, www.prca.org, is now officially owned by the denomination. This past year Mr. Chuck Terpstra was hired part time as webmaster. Synod also approved the DMC budget for 2013.

Approval was given to the work of Synodical deputies, and the appointment of deputies to new terms of service were approved. The Catechism Book Committee's work also received approval - they have been busy editing proof texts for the published version of the Heidelberg Catechism, as well as adding corrections to memory and work books.

May God bless the work of Synod. Please continue to pray for this labor.