Conference
The Collegial Bishop Revisited: The Classis and Presbytery at Issue

May 22 & 23 2018
At the Theologische Universiteit Kampen, The Netherlands

PROGRAM

Tuesday May 22

09:45  Registration, coffee/tea

10:30  Opening of the conference

10:45  1. Allan Janssen
      New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick NJ, USA / Reformed Church of America

11:05  Q & A with Allan Janssen

11:15  2. Leon van den Broeke
      Theologische Universiteit Kampen / Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam / Protestant Church in the Netherlands / Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Liberated

          Lecture:  “Classis as Community? Between Ecclesial Hyperindividualism, Catholicity and Safety”

11:35  Q & A with Leon van den Broeke

11:45  3. Reflections by René de Reuver
      Secretary-general Protestant Church in the Netherlands

12:05  Q & A with René de Reuver

12:15  Lunch

THE NETHERLANDS

13:15  4. Hilbrand van Eeken
      Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands

          Lecture:  “Practice ground in dealing with differences”

13:35  Q & A with Hilbrand van Eeken
13:45  **5. Klaas-Willem de Jong**  
Protestantse Theologische Universiteit Amsterdam-Groningen / Protestant Church in the Netherlands

**Lecture:**  
“Half a bishop. A critical outline of the so-called ‘classispredikant’ in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands”

14:05  **Q & A with Klaas-Willem de Jong**

**NORTH-AMERICA**

14:15  **6. Kathy Smith**  
Christian Reformed Church North-America

**Lecture:**  
“Classis Renewal: Balancing Tensions and Encouraging Health”

14:35  **Q & A with Kathy Smith**

14:45  **Break, coffee/tea**

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

15:15  **7. Adam Csukás**  
Lecture Czech Republic

**Lecture:**  
“Classis in the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren”

15:35  **Q & A with Adam Csukás**

**SCOTLAND**

15:45  **8. John Chalmers**  
Former Moderator Presbyterian Church Scotland

**Lecture:**  
“Presbytery as the Engine of the Church?”

16:05  **Q & A with John Chalmers**

16:15  **Break, soft drinks, walk towards city centre**

17:00  **Guided city walk through Kampen**

18:30  **Dinner, a BBQ in the gardens of the Theologische Universiteit Kampen**
Wednesday May 23

09:15  Morning prayer

THE NETHERLANDS

09:30  9. Hans Schaeffer  
         Theologische Universiteit Kampen / 
         Reformed Churches in the Netherlands 
         Liberated

Lecture:  “Classical Action as Embodying Christ. Practical and Systematic 
          Reflections on the classis”

09:50  Q & A with Hans Schaeffer

NORTH-AMERICA

10:00  10. Joe Small  
         Presbyterian Church in North-America

Lecture:  “How Polity Dies: Form without Substance in the Presbyterian Church 
          (U.S.A.)”

10:20  Q & A with Joe Small

10:30  Break, coffee/tea

GLOBALIZATION, LOCALIZATION, REGIONALIZATION

11:00  11. Roel Kuiper  
         Rector Theologische Universiteit Kampen and 
         member of the Senate of the Dutch 
         Parliament

Lecture:  “Embedding and disembedding: the classis and society”

11:20  Q & A with Roel Kuiper

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

11:30  Discussions in small groups on classis and presbytery on the three main questions

12:30  Lunch

PLENARY SESSION

13:30  Plenary session, discussing the results of the small group conversations

CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

14:15  Concluding remarks and closing of the conference

14:30  Meeting time, coffee/tea
In *A Collegial Bishop?* classis and presbytery are considered from a cross-cultural, indeed cross-national, perspective of the inheritors of Geneva and Edinburgh in their contemporary contexts in the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United States.

### REVIEWS

**Alan Janssen**  
— Pastor, Community Church of Glen Rock, NJ  
*Assistant Professor of Theology, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, NJ*  
“Dutch theological A. A. van Ruler compares church order to the rafters of a church building. Church order sustains the space within which the church is met by God, where it engages in its plan with God *(liturgy), and where it is used by God in its mission in and to God’s world. Presbyterian church order intends to be faithful to its root in God’s Word, as it is shaped around the office of elder and governed through a series of councils of the church.”

**Leon van den Broeke**  
— Pastor, Protestant Dutch Church in the Netherlands  
*Assistant Professor of Religion, Law, and Society at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam*  
“If the classis assembly wants to survive the twenty-first century, then wonderful opportunities for the classis as the Protestant diocese need to be used. Episkope and koinonia are not competitors. When there is episcopate instead of bureaucracy, koinonia will flourish. When there is koinonia there will be episcopate.”

**Joseph Small**  
— *Director of the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA)*  
“Geneva’s Venerable Company of Pastors recorded its roster and the proceedings of its meetings in *The Register of the Company of Pastors*. These sixteenth-century records reveal a gathering of pastors who placed scripture and worship, theology and prayer, at the center of the church’s life and the heart of pastoral vocation. In an age of ecclesial uncertainty and pastoral confusion, the pattern is suggestive … contemporary presbyteries could do worse than to think through Calvin’s originating vision for councils that were able to hear God’s word as they shaped the ministry and mission of congregations and of the wider church.”
Robert Vosloo
— Systematic Theology and Ecclesiology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
“Within the context of South Africa and its history of apartheid, the story of the unification of the presbyteries of Stellenbosch (within the context of the struggle for church reunification within the Dutch Reformed Church family) is ... a testimony to the hopeful role the presbytery structure can play by offering a space conducive to dialogue and the creation of more adequate church structures.”

Craig Van Gelder
— Professor of Congregational Mission, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN
“Polity need to support the ministry of the church, which in turn flows out of the very nature of the church. A church order needs to start by identifying what this ministry is and then proceed to consider the necessary shared structures and organizational practices which support this ministry.”

Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae
“This is a book which should be studied by all candidates for the ministry of churches with a presbyterian polity and elders, and other members should be encouraged to read it too.”