



CONFEDERATION OF REFORMED EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
VISITING DELEGATE REPORT—2006
Summary Report

The meeting of the 2006 Augustine Presbytery (CREC) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania was marked by diligent labor, joyful fellowship, the renewal of existing friendships, and the establishment of new ones. The Augustine Presbytery now has 20 member churches and an additional seven (7) Candidate Churches on the horizon (there are also 7 Mission Churches too). For a bit of perspective on this, consider that just two years ago, when we held our CREC Presbytery in Lancaster, we began that meeting with 22 churches. The kindness of the Lord is upon. He has been faithful and our response must be one of faithfulness too.

Amidst the reports and the work, the laughter and the weariness, humility marked every gathering as the delegates showed tremendous respect for one another. The absence of jealousy, rancor, and grudges betrayed their Christian character and provided refreshing edification. These men—our brothers and fellow servants—conducted themselves as those privileged to work in all things as unto the Lord. They worked with a thoughtful eye to us, their brothers in Anselm. This reflected a sincere catholicity, revealed the knowledge that they are not alone, and that this is part of our testimony before a watching world and a watching Church. All of this was a beautiful demonstration of the faithfulness of these servants as they evidenced that it was the Lord Christ whom they served (Colossians 3:24). This humble faithfulness was present in their deliberations, their shared meals, their planning, their praying, their listening...and this, the whole time. Consistently, the Augustine Presbytery showed a consciousness of the broader church, the watching eyes, the willingness of some to malign, and the importance of not giving more grist for the mill. While the Lord continues to bless our Confederation, the Augustine delegates conducted their work with an eye to the future, knowing that there is much to learn and much to do, because there is much that is before us in the CREC.

The Fellowship and the Leadership...

Unquestionably, the fellowship of our Augustine Presbytery was refreshing. Our fellowship happily included the unparalleled hospitality of the Detweilers, the sharing of fine wines and top beers, delightful food, and the uncompromising sounds of Pastor Strawbridge on the guitar (even dedicating the song, *Wish You Were Here* to Anselm). Pastor Strawbridge set the tone of this gathering through his leadership, and this is something he did *pastorally*. He kept the meetings fluid with controlled oversight and gracious flexibility. He displayed good humor, an appreciated expediency, and stayed the course according to a defined purpose. We are blessed with such pastors.

In Conclusion: "righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17)

It is likely that the peacefulness which marked the Augustine gathering is due, in part, to the respect that was shown for Augustine Moderator Strawbridge and CREC Council Moderator Booth.

"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

This respect was evident in every breath. Solid gratitude was demonstrated through the prayers offered, the tone of speech, and the public inquiries that were made. In reflection, I, for one, remain thankful to be a part of this Confederation. This thankfulness is to the Lord for the weighty work that He has placed before us, and for the faithfulness He has displayed. One fragment of this faithfulness was seen in Lancaster, through the labors of the delegates and the Moderators. Admittedly, there is a great deal of learning yet before us—we are, in many respects (not all!)—still being defined as a body of Churches. We are *a* body, we all partake of one loaf, we are one, and in this exclusivity, we are learning to work together and work within a proper, biblical, diversity. In this sense, yes, we are an intolerant group, but we are also joyfully diverse. The world does not understand this, and sadly, many in the Church do not either. Yet, this is who we are, this is the privilege we possess, and we have the opportunity to display the loveliness of Christ in our Presbyteries, in our Churches, and to the glory of God. Unquestionably, the CREC is blessed, and it was a blessing to represent you, the faithful men of Anselm, during the Augustine Presbytery.

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