

Classis Huron

To Classis Huron:

Henry and I were tasked with the job of evaluating Dr. John Van Dorp's latest sermon and were asked to give Classis some advice as to First CRC of Owen Sound's request for an extension of his license to exhort.

As far as this sermon goes, we like to make a few comments. In our humble opinion, this sermon was more of a historical lecture than a sermon. John spent way too much time on the background of the word "Christian" and on the history of the city of Antioch. Because of that, John did not spend sufficient time unpacking the text or helping people understand what it means to be Christian according to the Catechism. We suggest that John limit his historical comments on the background of the word "Christian" to a short introduction and then wrestle with what it means to be Christian in the body of the sermon. These are just a few remarks to possibly make this message better.

As far as the request of First CRC Owen Sound goes, Henry and I would like to recommend that Classis Huron renew or extend Dr. John's license to exhort. The grounds for this recommendation on our part are as follows:

1. As Church Order Art. 43. b. mentions, "licensed exhorters should be gifted, well informed, consecrated, and able to edify churches." Henry and I think that John fulfills each of these requirements. Case in point, John has been exhorting for 36 years and over those years people continue to express their appreciation for his messages. He obviously has demonstrated that he is gifted and able to edify the church.
2. As Church Order Art. 43 also mentions, Classis should establish on a regular basis whether there is a need for licensed exhorters. Henry and I think that there is sufficient need for exhorters. Between church vacancies, pastors' vacation time, and other occasions, there seems to be plenty of opportunity for others to speak. The fact that Dr. John delivered 8 messages during 2021, which was an interesting year due to Covid, is quite something.

In conclusion, we would like to encourage Dr. John Van Dorp in his work as an exhorter and, as mentioned above, we would also like to recommend extending Dr. John's licence to exhort.

Respectfully submitted,
Henry Meinen
Ed Jager

