

REPORT OF DEPUTY TO NORTH AMERICA

Rev. J. MacLeod

Synod Reports 2015

IN my capacity as interim Moderator of the Santa Fe Kirk Session, I visited Texas in June 2014 in order to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and to attend to other pastoral duties. The visit lasted for seven days. I was met at the airport by Mark Smith and safely driven to the Travel Lodge where I had stayed on several previous occasions. Mr. Alasdair Macpherson, who continues to serve as an Assessor Elder, arrived the following day. The sacrament was administered on the Sabbath and the services throughout, especially the evening ones, were well attended. Mr. Caleb Hembd, who, within a fortnight was due to be licensed to preach the Gospel by the Southern Presbytery, was present. He, and his wife and family, were resident in the manse. We are grateful to him for conducting most of the services in Santa Fe from the time that he completed his studies, and for continuing to do so up to the present as a probationer. The congregational elders, Mr. Carl Smith, Mr. Jeshurun Hembd and Mr. Joseph Smith, are also to be commended for the faithful manner in which they keep the services, especially the last-named who has, over the years, contributed so much and so self-denyingly to the well-being of the congregation. The Rev. Roderick MacLeod conducted the communion services in October and when several visitors from Canada and other parts of the United States were present. We are grateful to Mr. MacLeod for doing so and we hope that his labours will prove not to have been in vain in the Lord. I have also to report that I visited Chesley, Ontario, in October 2014, and conducted all the services connected with the communion season there. This was in place of the Rev. Roderick MacLeod, who is the interim Moderator of the Kirk Session there. Again, the visit was only for one week, but, as at Santa Fe, it was one of many appearances in the pulpit. On this occasion I was met at Toronto Airport by Mr. Gilbert Zekveld and the two-and-a-half-hour car journey to the Chesley manse was accomplished without incident. Accommodation was provided for me in the manse where I was very comfortable and well provided for. In the absence of a settled pastor the elders of the Chesley congregation – David Kuiper and Gilbert Zekveld – devotedly attend to their duties, including the keeping of the services on Sabbath and weekday – as, also,

does Rick Bouman, Deacon, in his own sphere. The services were well attended and several visitors from the United States were present – Joseph Smith from Texas (with his wife Carolyn and three children), Parnell McCarter from Grand Rapids and Aashik Rao, from New Jersey. We were glad to see them and happy to renew our acquaintance with them. We welcomed Hector Ross from the London congregation on the Friday and it was by his hired car that we made the journey back to the Toronto Airport on Monday afternoon. The overnight flight back to Heathrow Airport was swift and uneventful.

I have to report that both the congregations visited appeared to be in a healthy condition. They have, in common, many children regularly present in the means of grace with their parents and this is a spectacle that cannot be other than encouraging on the human level. In North America, as everywhere else, at a time when the whole earth seems to be covered by gross darkness, there is a crying need for an outpouring of the Spirit of God. We hope and pray that the Lord of the Harvest will soon provide both congregations with pastors after His own heart. I would like to express my appreciation of the many kindnesses shown to me both in Santa Fe and Chesley and, above all, and, as is fitting, render thanks to the Keeper of Israel who brought me safely to these faraway destinations and back to my home again. “The whole earth let His glory fill.”