

**CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS
of the
NORTH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED COUNCIL**

CONSTITUTION

(As amended by the 3rd (1977) and 22nd (1996) Meetings of the Council)

I. NAME

The name of the Council shall be The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council.

II. BASIS OF THE COUNCIL

Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of a council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.

III. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common and by the sharing of insights “communicate advantages to one another” (*Institutes* IV, 2, 1).
2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.
3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed faith.
4. Promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, and church education.

IV. NATURE AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

It is understood that all actions and decisions taken are advisory in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies.

V. MEMBERSHIP

1. For the purposes of the initiation of the Council those of the following churches which are officially represented in these organization meetings whose assemblies give their approval be the founding churches of the Council: namely, Christian Reformed Church; Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Presbyterian Church in America; Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod; Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

2. Those churches shall be eligible for membership which profess and maintain the basis for fellowship expressed in II and that maintain the marks of the true church (pure preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, the faithful exercise of discipline).

3. Admission to, suspension from, restoration to (after suspension), and termination of membership shall be proposed by the Council to the member churches by two thirds of the ballots cast; this proposal must then be approved within three years by two thirds of the major assemblies of the member churches. A proposal to suspend or terminate the membership of a member church may be initiated only by a major assembly of a member church. A suspended church may send delegates to meetings of the Council but they shall not vote nor may that church be represented on the Interim Committee.

VI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by recommendation of the Council by two-thirds of the ballots cast and this recommendation must then be adopted by two-thirds of the major assemblies of the member churches. The amendment as recommended to the member churches is unamendable.

BYLAWS

(As amended by the 4th (1978), 5th (1979), 7th (1981), 8th (1982), 15th (1989), 22nd (1996), 32nd (2006), and 36th (2010) Meetings of the Council)

I. MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

1. The Council normally shall meet once each year.

2. Before adjournment the Council shall set the date and place for the next meeting. Ordinarily NAPARC shall meet on the third Tuesday and Wednesday of November starting at 2:00 p.m. and concluding at noon on the second day. On the evening of the first day there will be a banquet and program arranged by the host church. The Interim Committee shall make arrangements for the next meeting and shall supervise the election of a chairman, secretary, and treasurer.

3. All meetings shall be open, except when the Council decides to meet in Executive Session.

II. DELEGATES

1. Each member church shall appoint no more than four delegates to each meeting of the Council.

2. Each delegate of the member church shall be entitled to vote on items before the Council. Voting on major decisions (as determined by the body) shall be by unit vote of the church delegates.

III. OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. Each meeting of the Council shall elect its own officers, as follows: chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer. The Vice-chairman shall normally succeed to the office of chairman, and shall be declared elected by white ballot, unless the Council determines to conduct an election.

2. The responsibilities of the officers will be as follows:

a. Chairman - to preside at meetings of the Council, to make required appointments, to see that business is conducted in an orderly manner. He shall be a member of the annual audit committee.

b. Vice-chairman - to assist the chairman upon his request, and to succeed to the chairmanship at the next annual meeting after the opening of the session. He shall be a member of the annual audit committee.

c. Secretary - to keep a roll of delegates, to record and distribute the minutes of the Council, to carry on the correspondence in reference to Standing Committees, Study Committees and the next meeting of the Council, and to prepare the Agenda for the next meeting of the Council. Agenda materials shall be in the hands of the Secretary at least six weeks prior to the meeting date of the Council and shall be sent to delegates four weeks prior to the meeting of the Council. Agenda materials received after the deadline shall be reviewed by the Interim Committee before they are given to the Council for docket consideration (see *Bylaws* IV:5).

d. Treasurer - to receive bills for the expenses of the meeting of the Council, to receive funds to pay bills incurred by the Council, and to submit reports regularly to the Council. Yearly written reports shall be required which describe the nature of the accounts, the deposits made, the investments made, and the interest/dividends earned. An internal audit shall be

conducted each year by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman prior to the yearly meeting of NAPARC with a report given to the council.

3. Terms of office:
 - a. The chairman shall serve for a one year term, such term beginning with the annual meeting at which he presides, and concluding after the opening items of the next meeting.
 - b. The vice-chairman shall serve a one year term and shall normally succeed the chairman after the opening of the next annual meeting and the election of officers.
 - c. The secretary and treasurer shall serve for one year terms, and shall be eligible for re-election.
4. Travel, housing and meal expenses shall be borne by the sending churches.

IV. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL

The Council shall deal only with:

1. Communications received from member churches.
2. Inquiries from churches for membership.
3. Reports produced by its Committees.
4. Official documents from organizations in which member churches are co-operating.
5. And such matters as may by majority vote be declared properly before the Council.
6. The regular docket of the meeting of the Council shall be as follows:
 - I. Call to Order
 - II. Roll Call
 - a. Member Churches
 - b. Invited Observers
 - III. Election of Officers: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Treasurer
 - IV. Reports from Various Member Churches*
 - V. Reports from Observer Churches
 - VI. Adoption of Docket
 - VII. Election of Additional Members to Interim Committee
 - VIII. Approval of Minutes
 - IX. Communications:
 - X. Treasurer's Report
 - XI. Website Committee Report
 - XII. Interim Committee Report

- XIII. Old Business
- XIV. Reports on Conference/Consultation Held
- XV. New Business
- XVI. Arrangements for Next Meeting (place, time, invitees)
- XVII. Adjournment

*This is a time when NAPARC delegates assemble to share reports from their churches, to talk about important issues raised, and to pray with and for each other.

V. COMMITTEES AND CONFERENCES

1. Committees of the Council

The Council may establish and appoint as many such committees as needed. These committees shall continue until the matters assigned to them have been completed. However, if such committees are to represent all member churches, the delegates of each church to the current meeting of the Council shall designate its representative(s).

2. NAPARC Study Committees

The Council may establish NAPARC Study Committees to study matters of mutual concern to the NAPARC churches. In erecting such a Study Committee the Council shall indicate the number of representatives each church may appoint to the Committee; equal representation from each church shall be authorized. It shall also designate one of the churches, which is to convene the Committee. The option of participating and the manner of selecting representatives shall be left to each church.

3. Conferences

a. The Council may call Conferences on subjects of mutual concern to which all member churches are urged to send representatives.

b. Annual consultations between the agencies of the various NAPARC churches may be held as desirable with each member church being urged to participate.

4. Materials and Conclusions

Materials and Conclusions of NAPARC Study Committees and Conferences shall be sent to the Interchurch Committees of all the member churches, and to the NAPARC Interim Committee.

a. The chief use of materials and conclusions of the NAPARC Study Committees or Conferences is

- (1) for the information and instruction of member churches, and
- (2) the conveying of possible responses, approval, disagreement, or further study by each member church to the other.

b. The materials and conclusions are to be considered the property of the several member churches, and may be used and publicized by them only in their own name unless approved by other member churches also; joint publicity of the results of the Study Committee or Conferences shall be by the churches themselves as distinguished from publicity by NAPARC which is consultative rather than policy making. Neither NAPARC nor NAPARC Study Committees or Conferences may speak for the member churches.

c. The ultimate purpose of the NAPARC Study Committees and Conferences is to search the Scriptures for the enrichment of our understanding of God's truth, to discuss the application of God's Word in the life of the churches and to seek unity through the development of a common commitment and cooperation.

5. Expense

The expenses of NAPARC Study Committees and Conferences are to be borne by the member churches (including such items as: meals, travel, lodging, etc.). The cost for such items as duplication and secretarial aids is to borne by the NAPARC treasury.

VI. INTERIM COMMITTEE

The Interim Committee shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Council, together with such others appointed by the member Churches as will provide one representative from each member Church. When the Secretary and or Treasurer serves for more than one consecutive term, his delegation may elect an additional member to the Interim Committee, if desired. Each denomination of NAPARC shall have one vote on the Interim Committee, and each denomination's delegation determines who represents that denomination. The Interim Committee will meet on the first day of the NAPARC sessions, ordinarily from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to conduct its essential business. If the officers deem a longer time is necessary they may convene the Interim Committee at an earlier time. Ordinarily only members (or designated alternates) of the Interim Committee shall attend Interim Committee meetings. The participating churches shall bear the expenses of their members to Interim Committee meetings.

Its functions shall be limited to those specified below:

1. Make the arrangements and prepare the agenda for the meeting of the Council.
2. Call meetings of the Council or Study Committees when unusual circumstances warrant.
3. Give counsel to the Secretary regarding correspondence and procedure.

4. Deal responsibly with all matters inadvertently overlooked which call for action before the next meeting of the Council.

5. Advise the Council on matters coming before it.

6. Extend invitations to non-member churches that adopt the basis of the fellowship of NAPARC (*Constitution*, Article II) to send (at their own expense) official observers to the next meeting.

7. Extend invitations to other non-member churches to send (at their own expense) observers (as “other guests”) to the next meeting.

VII. OFFICIAL OBSERVERS AND OTHER GUESTS.

1. Official observers are duly appointed representatives of non-member churches that adopt the basis of fellowship of NAPARC (*Constitution* Article II), and are invited to attend the meeting (at their own expense) by the Interim Committee. Up to two official observers per sending church may be given the privilege of the floor, which may be revoked at any time by a majority vote of the delegates present.

2. All persons present for the meeting who are neither delegates nor official observers (as defined in 1, above) shall be considered as “other guests.” A two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present shall be required to grant the privilege of the floor to other guests, which may be subsequently revoked at any time by a majority vote of the delegates present.

VII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended or suspended by the Council on motion passed by two-thirds of the voting delegates.