

Council Minutes
Forty-Third Meeting
North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
Grand Rapids, Michigan
November 14, 2017, 2:00 PM – November 16, 2017, 12:00 Noon

I. Call to Order

The 43rd annual meeting of NAPARC is convened at the Puritan Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan on Tuesday, November 14, 2017. The Chairman, Rev. Bartel Elshout, calls the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and welcomes the delegates. He leads in singing Psalm 67, *O God to Us Show Mercy*, the reading of Joel 2:12-18, 22-29 and with prayer. From the words of Joel, he urges us to pray for, long for, and wrestle for revival of the church, and to seek to give visible witness to the world of our unity in Christ.

The Chairman also draws attention to the recent death of Dr. Morton Smith and the death last year of Dr. Bruce Stewart. Both men were founders of NAPARC. We are indebted to them and thankful to God for their faithful labors.

II. Roll Call

A. Member Churches

The Chairman calls the roll of Member Churches. The delegates from each church introduce themselves.

MEMBER CHURCH	DELEGATES
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)	Rev. Dr. Kyle E. Sims Rev. Tim Phillips Rev. Patrick Malphrus Rev. Bill Barron
Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)	Mr. Les Vanderveen Rev. Doug Vandeburgt Mr. Gerrit Bos Rev. Steve Vandavelde
Église réformée du Québec (ERQ)	Rev. Bernard Westerveld Rev. Karis Mpindi
Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)	Rev. Ian Macleod Mr. Connor J. Keuning
Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)	Rev Bartel Elshout Mr. James Beeke Rev. Don Overbeek Mr. Corney Les
Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)	Dr. S. Steve Park Rev. Young Kee Kim
Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA)	Rev. David Kim Rev. Jun Young Rev. Kyung Chun Park

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)	Mr. Mark T. Bube Rev. Jack Sawyer Dr. L. Anthony Curto Rev. Stephen Tracey
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC)	Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen Rev. D. Douglas Gebbie Mr. Christopher Levi
Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)	Rev. Michael McGee Rev. Travis Grassmid Rev. Dr. Maynard Koerner Mr. Dennis Luquette
Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA)	Rev. J. Bruce Martin Rev. E. Matthew Kingswood Rev. Bruce Parnell Mr. Dean McHenry
United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA)	Rev. John A Bouwers Rev. Todd De Rooy Rev. Casey Freswick Rev. Richard J. Miller

B. Official Observers

The Chairman calls the roll of observer churches. The delegates from each church introduce themselves.

OBSERVER CHURCH	OBSERVERS
Protestant Reformed Church in America (PRCA)	Rev. Ken Koole Mr. Peter Van Der Schaaf Mr. Nathan Decker
Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC)	Rev. Kevin M. Backus Rev. Casey Southerland Rev. Tito Lyro

III. Approval of Minutes (2016)

A motion is made and supported to approve the minutes of the 2016 Council. The motion is adopted.

IV. Communications (including Report of the Interim Committee)

A. The following communications have been received.

1. NAPARC 2017 Delegate and Observer information was received from all churches
2. Church Reports for 2017 were received on time (Bylaw III.2.c) from all churches.
3. The NAPARC Foreign Missions Consultation report was received from Mr. Mark Bube, OPC, September 25, 2017.
4. Report of the Interim Committee meeting on November 14, 2017.

B. The report of the Interim Committee contains the following recommendations which it adopted and recommends to the Council.

1. The Interim Committee approves the Treasurer's Report and recommends the Treasurer's Report to the Council for adoption.

2. The Interim Committee approves the work of the Website Committee and their budget request for \$200, and recommends their work and request to the Council for approval.
3. Responding to a request from last year's Council to the Interim Committee, the Interim Committee recommends to the Council that this topic ("Religious liberty in the light of the Supreme Court of the United States ruling legalizing same-sex marriage") is best taken up by Member Churches.
4. The Interim Committee approves the *Question and Prayer Assignment Proposal* and recommends it to the Council for adoption.
5. The Interim Committee recommends for discussion the four topics held over from last year with the instruction from last year's council that delegates come prepared this year to discuss them, and that they be dealt with under item X of the Council Docket, *Discussion Regarding Progress Toward Organic Union*.
6. The Interim Committee reviews the ten suggestions for discussion extracted from the Member Church Reports (see attached list). The Interim Committee recommends to the Council that topics 8 and 9 be dealt with by amending the *Suggested Form for Member Church Reports* to include two additional items: "Diaconal Activity" and "Opportunities for Cooperation."
7. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council that topics 1,4, 7 be placed on the agenda for 2018, and that delegates come prepared for the discussion. This includes:
 - As North American culture is becoming increasingly pluralistic and secular how might we develop a vibrant Reformed witness, although we are a small, minority group?
 - Retaining the integrity of Reformed Confessionalism and Ecclesiology in a secular world.
 - The Reformed Church and norms for gender, sexuality, marriage, and the family.
8. The Interim Committee recommends the adoption of the following resolution: "Be it resolved that NAPARC thank Rev. Ron Potter for his 15 years of faithful service, supported by his wife Sharon, as secretary of this organization; that we accept his resignation for health reasons with regret and thank him for his conscientious attention to detail and wise counsel throughout his years of service; and that we pray for his good health and continued service in God's church and kingdom as the Lord may allow."
9. The Interim Committee recommends the following slate of officers to be elected:
 - a. Chairman – Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park
 - b. Vice-Chairman – Rev. David Kim
 - c. Secretary – Rev. Ralph Pontier
 - d. Treasurer – Rev. Dr. Maynard Koerner
10. The Interim Committee approves the budget presented by the Treasurer for presentation to the Council.
11. The Interim Committee recommends that the Council Docket be adopted.
12. The Interim Committee recommends that the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, the Bible Presbyterian Church, and the Netherlands Reformed Congregations be invited to observe NAPARC 2018.

V. Adoption of the Docket

Recommendation 11 of the Interim Committee to approve the docket is taken up and supported. The recommendation is adopted.

VI. Election of Officers

- A. **Recommendation 9** of the Interim Committee to elect a slate of officers is taken up and supported.
- B. The following are elected as officers for the coming year.
 - 1. Chairman – Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park
 - 2. Vice-Chairman – Rev. David Kim.
 - 3. Secretary – Rev. Ralph Pontier
 - 4. Treasurer – Rev. Dr. Maynard Koerner
- C. Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park assumes the chair.

VII. Announcement of Additional Delegates Appointed to the Interim Committee

In anticipation that current members of the Interim Committee may plan to be replaced before the next Council, the following are appointed to the Interim Committee to replace those presently serving. None.

VIII. Reports from Member Churches

- A. **Recommendation 4** of the Interim Committee to approve the *Question and Prayer Assignment Proposals* is taken up and seconded. The schedule, as distributed with the Docket, is adopted.
- B. The Chairman calls upon each Member Church to give its report which is followed by questions from the appointed questioner, questions from the floor, and by prayer.

The Reporter
ARPC – Rev. Patrick Malphrus
CanRC – Rev. Doug Vandeburgt
ERQ – Rev. Ben Westerveld
FRCNA – Mr. Connor J. Keuning
HRC – Mr. Jim Beeke
KAPC – Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park
KPCA – Kosin – Rev. David Kim

The Questioner Who Also Prays
OPC– Rev. Jack Sawyer
PCA – Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen
PresRC – Rev. D. Douglas Gebbie
RCUS – Rev. Michael McGee
RPCNA – Rev. Matthew Kingswood
URCNA – Rev. Richard J. Miller
ARPC – Rev. Tim Phillips

- C. The Council breaks for supper at the Heritage Reformed Congregation, 540 Crescent Street, NE, Grand Rapids. After supper, the delegates and members of the host church gather for a worship service led by Rev. Mark Kelderman.
- D. The Council reconvenes at 10:00 am Wednesday morning. The chairman leads opening devotions with the singing of Psalm 102, with prayer, with the reading of Ephesians 1:7-10, and with words of encouragement.
- E. The reports of the Member Churches continue.

The Reporter
OPC – Dr. L. Anthony Curto
PCA – Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen
PresRC – Rev. D. Douglas Gebbie
RCUS – Rev. Michael McGee
RPCNA – Rev. J. Bruce Martin
URCNA – Rev. Todd De Rooy

The Questioner Who Also Prays
CanRC – Rev. Doug Vandeburgt
ERQ – Rev. Karis Mpindi
FRCNA – Rev. Ian Macloud
HRC – Rev. Don Overbeek
KAPC – Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park
KPCA – Rev. David Kim

IX. Reports from Official Observer Churches

The Chairman calls upon each Observer Church to give their report which is followed by questions from the appointed questioner and from the floor and by prayer.

The Reporter
PRCA – Mr. Nathan Decker
BPC – Rev. Kevin M. Backus

The Questioner Who Also Prays
PCA – Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen
RPCNA – Rev. Bruce Parnell

X. Discussion Regarding Progress Toward Organic Union (as proposed by the Interim Committee)

- A. **Recommendation 5** of the Interim Committee is taken up and seconded. The Interim Committee recommends for discussion the four topics held over from last year with the instruction from last year's Council that delegates come prepared this year to discuss them (*Minutes X.2*, p. 7), and that they be dealt with under item X of the Council Docket, *Discussion Regarding Progress Toward Organic Union*. The recommendation is adopted and the subjects are discussed. They are:
1. How important is organic union among dissimilar NAPARC denominations? For example, do the denominations which focus on a specific ethnic/linguistic group in North America really need to merge with other NAPARC denominations?
 2. What denominational distinctives presently exist as obstacles to organic union? (Examples: exclusive psalmody, delegated or non-delegated assemblies of synods, strict subscription or good faith subscription, unique denominational histories, etc.)
 3. What denominational distinctives should be considered as valid obstacles to organic union under biblical scrutiny?
 4. Discuss the possibility of a structure that allows for both distinctives and organic union.
- B. The assembly breaks for supper at the Country Inn and Suites Motel, after which Dr. Joel Beeke gives an inspirational address on the subject "An Earnest Call to Help Restore Family Worship among Our Church Families."
- C. The Council reconvenes at 10:00 am Thursday morning. The session is opened by Vice-Chairman, Rev. David Kim, who reads from Ephesians 4:15-16, speaks words of encouragement, and leads in prayer.
- D. The four points above are further discussed.
1. The Chairman rules that the discussion will terminate at 10:45 a.m.
 2. A motion is made to appoint an ad-hoc committee to explore concrete ways in which we could begin to bundle our resources for greater visible expressions of our unity in Christ. The committee should be composed of a representative from each Member Church.
 3. A procedural motion is made and supported to vote by units (one vote per delegation). The procedural motion is adopted.
 4. The main motion is defeated.

XI. Treasurer's Report (including Auditors' report)

- A. Interim Committee **Recommendation 1** to consider the Treasurer's Report for adoption is taken up and seconded.
1. The Treasurer reads his report and answers questions.
 2. The Audit Committee (last year's Chairman and Vice-Chairman) report that the financial records are in good order
- B. The recommendation to adopt Treasurer's Report is adopted.

- C. The treasurer announces that he will serve for one more year. A motion is made and supported to appoint the officers as a search committee to recommend a new treasurer in 2018. The motion is adopted.

XII. Reports and Appointments of Operating Committees

- A. Interim Committee **Recommendation 2** to approve the work of the Website Committee together with its budget request of \$200 is taken up and seconded.
- B. Mr. Mark Bube, Chairman of the Website Committee, presents the committee's report and request for a budget of \$200.
- C. The recommendation to approve the Website Committee's work and budget request is adopted.
- D. A motion is made and supported to appoint Mr. Gerrit Bos to the Website Committee. The motion is adopted.

XIII. Old Business

- A. Interim Committee **Recommendation 3** dealing with the topic "Religious liberty in the light of the Supreme Court of the United States ruling legalizing same-sex marriage" is taken up and seconded.
 - 1. Recommendation 3 is that this topic is best taken up by the Member Churches.
 - 2. This deals with the 2016 Council's instruction to the 2017 Interim Committee for suggestions on how to deal with topics such as this.
 - 3. The recommendation is adopted.

XIV. Reports of Study Committees (none)

XV. Reports of Conferences (none)

XVI. Reports on Consultations (and, where convenient, appointment of host and convener for next Consultation)

- A. Home Missions - none
- B. World Missions
 - 1. Mr. Mark Bube presents the report which was attached to the Docket and answers questions.
 - 2. The next World Mission's Consultation is scheduled for September 18-19, 2018, in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, with Mr. Bube as the chairman and the Rev. Douglas B. Clawson as the secretary.
- C. Christian/Church Education – none
- D. Relief/Diaconal Ministries
 - 1. A motion is made and seconded to appoint the OPC to host, and Mr. David Nakhla to convene, a consultation on relief and diaconal ministry.
 - 2. The motion is adopted.
- E. Theological Training
 - 1. A motion is made and seconded to appoint the ARP to host, and Rev. Dr. Kyle E. Sims to convene, a consultation on theological training.
 - 2. The motion is adopted.
- F. Youth Ministries
 - 1. A motion is made and seconded to appoint the ERQ to host, and Rev. Ben Westerveld to convene, a consultation on youth ministries.

2. The motion is adopted.

XVII. Arrangements for the Next (2018) Meeting

NAPARC *Bylaw* I.2 stipulates that “The host Member Church will ordinarily be chosen (alphabetically) from the *List of NAPARC Member Churches (Bylaws, IX.1)*; if a Member Church is not able to host the next meeting, the next listed (alphabetically) Member Church(es) will be asked until a host Member Church is secured. Before adjournment the Council shall determine the host, the date, and the place for the next meeting.”

- A. The next scheduled host is the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)
- B. Place: Philadelphia, PA
- C. Date: Second Tuesday of November (*Bylaws* I.1): November 13-15, 2018.
- D. Invitees
 1. Interim Committee **Recommendation 12** is taken up and seconded. The recommendation is to invite the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, the Bible Presbyterian Church, and the Netherlands Reformed Congregations to observe NAPARC 2018.
 2. The recommendation to invite three denominations is adopted.

XVIII. Any Remaining Items from the Report of the Interim Committee (including approval of the proposed budget)

- A. Interim Committee **Recommendation 10** that the Treasurer’s budget be approved is taken up and seconded.
- B. The Treasurer explains the budget and answers questions. The dues remain the same at \$1,000 per Member Church.
- C. The recommendation to approve the budget is adopted.

XIX. New Business

- A. Interim Committee **Recommendation 6** is taken up and seconded. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council that topics 8 and 9 be dealt with by amending the *Suggested Form for Member Church Reports* to include two additional items: “Diaconal Activity” and “Opportunities for Cooperation in Diaconal Activities.” The recommendation is adopted.
- B. Interim Committee **Recommendation 7** is taken up and seconded. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council that topics 1,4, 7 be placed on the agenda for 2018, and that delegates come prepared for the discussion. These topics are:
 - As North American culture is becoming increasingly pluralistic and secular how might we develop a vibrant Reformed witness, although we are a small, minority group?
 - Retaining the integrity of Reformed Confessionalism and Ecclesiology in a secular world.
 - The Reformed Church and norms for gender, sexuality, marriage, and the family.
 1. The recommendation to place this on next year’s docket is adopted.
 2. A motion is made and supported to make this a matter a special order of the day for Wednesday afternoon not later than after the afternoon break. The motion is adopted.
- C. Interim Committee **Recommendation 8** is taken up and seconded
 1. The recommendation is to approve the following resolution of thanks: “Be it resolved that NAPARC thank Rev. Ron Potter for his 15 years of faithful service, supported by his wife Sharon, as secretary of this organization; that we accept his resignation for health reasons with regret; that we thank him for his conscientious attention to detail and wise counsel throughout his years of service; and that we pray for his good health and continued service in God’s church and kingdom as the Lord may allow.”

2. The resolution of thanks is adopted.

XX. Adjournment

- A. A motion is made and supported to adjourn. The motion is adopted.
- B. The Chairman leads in closing devotions. He reads from Hebrews 10:19-25, leads in the singing of the doxology, and offers prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Ralph A. Pontier
Secretary