

NORTH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED COUNCIL

Press Release

November 25, AD 2019

The 45th annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) convened on Tuesday afternoon, November 12, 2019 at the Rohthem Presbyterian Church in Anaheim, California, a congregation of the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin). The outgoing Chairman, Rev. Dr. David Kim, led the opening devotions.

NAPARC is composed of 13-member churches which include the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), the Reformed Church of Quebec (Église réformée du Québec) (ERQ), the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA), the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC), the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC), the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Representatives of the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC) and the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRCA) attended as invited observers. No representatives of the PresRC were able to attend this year but they hope to return next year.

The basis of NAPARC's fellowship is "Confessing Jesus Christ as the 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."¹

One of the first orders of business was the election of new officers. Elected as Chairman was Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto of the OPC. Elected as Vice-chairman was Rev. Bryce Hales of the PCA. Rev. Ralph Pontier was elected to a third term as Secretary, and Rev. Todd De Rooy was elected to a second term as Treasurer. The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship rotate annually among the 13-member churches following an alphabetical listing. The vice-chairman this year is slated to serve as chairman next year, and his denomination is asked to host the following year.

A large portion of time was spent on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday with each member church giving an oral report on the state of his denomination or federation. Following each report delegates could ask questions and a designated delegate led the group in prayer for the church that had reported. Reports related reasons for rejoicing and reasons for humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand. There were encouraging reports of progress toward greater levels of unity among some of the member churches. The reports made evident that the Lord continues to build his church as he has promised. All matters were brought before the Lord in prayer.

On Tuesday evening we enjoyed a delicious buffet of Korean food provided by the host congregation. Our hosts also led a devotional service that evening with Rev. Barnabas Jung presiding and with Rev. Dr. John Song preaching. His text was 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3 and he spoke on "Life in Christ: works of faith, labors of love, and endurance of hope." On the Wednesday evening following a sumptuous feast, we were inspired as we listened to Rev. Dr. David Kim give an historical overview of the Kosin church both in Korea and in North America – a church born in the crucible of extreme persecution and martyrdom.

¹ NAPARC Constitution, II. Basis

On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, delegates were able to challenge and encourage one another through a discussion of three topics suggested by member churches. The topics were:

- *What is the current stance within NAPARC on organic union?* This was proposed for discussion by the ARPC. During this discussion, delegates were referred to a previously published document on the NAPARC website, “Informational Documents” which contains a definition of organic unity and an essay on the topic.
- *As we are and will be dealing with an increasing number of issues and cases regarding such topics as human sexuality; marriage, divorce and remarriage; LGBTQ issues; pornography, gender identification, etc., would it be helpful to create a NAPARC depository to share any denominational position papers or committee reports or other publications dealing with these issues?* This was proposed for discussion by the HRC. As a result of this discussion, the NAPARC Secretary was asked to collect, index, and distribute a list of currently available resources from member churches.
- *The wisdom, propriety, and utility of a linguistic updating of Confessional Standards.* This was proposed for discussion by the OPC. Delegates expressed both encouragement and caution regarding such an endeavor.

Another topic was introduced and explained but the discussion was scheduled for next year’s meeting. The RPCNA wishes to discuss the propriety and wisdom of limiting denominations within national boundaries.

The NAPARC schedule runs from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday noon and provides time slots for bi-lateral meetings between the inter-church or ecumenical committees of the member churches. These smaller meetings have proven fruitful for member churches to grow closer together and manifest more fully their oneness in Christ.

In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, NAPARC sponsors consultations where representatives of member churches gather to discuss cooperation in a specific area of ministry. For more than thirty years, there have been annual world mission consultations in September of each year. This year representatives from nine NAPARC member church world mission agencies (ARPC, CanRC, FRCNA, HRC, OPC, PCA, PresRC, RPCNA, and URCNA) met together at the OPC’s administration offices in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Joining with them were representatives from four NAPARC member church diaconal ministries or agencies (CanRC, FRCNA, OPC, and URCNA). It was reported: “The sessions were productive, and the fellowship was sweet.” Mr. Mark T. Bube served as the chairman and Rev. Dr. Arjan de Visser served as the secretary.

The next such NAPARC joint consultation is scheduled for September 15-16, 2020, again in Willow Grove, with Mr. Bube as the chairman and the Rev. Douglas B. Clawson as the secretary for the world mission agencies, and Mr. David P. Nakhla as the chairman for the diaconal mission agencies.

The Council enjoyed the gracious and generous hospitality of the Rohthem Presbyterian Church and experienced warm and joyous fellowship with fellow delegates, observers, and other guests.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for November 10-12, 2020, to be hosted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at the Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Rev. Ralph A. Pontier
NAPARC Secretary