

### 3. Suggested Orders of the Day for the Annual Meeting (2012)

From the Report of the NAPARC Committee of Review to the 38th (2012) Meeting (pages 14–17, some footnotes omitted):

#### A. Annual Meeting

Since the occasion of the annual meeting is the primary opportunity for the Member Churches to meet in one place all together in pursuit of the dual purposes for which NAPARC was established—

- to advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one another, and
- [to] hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice

—the Committee devoted a considerable portion of its time to improving the utility of the time when the delegates are all present in the same place: at the annual meeting.

#### 1. Improving the Usefulness of the Member Church Reports

The Committee believes that the practice of reporting to one another on developments in our respective churches remains a vital part of our annual meetings in carrying out the purposes for which NAPARC was established—and that the opportunities which the discussion of the reports present, both for mutual encouragement and for prayer, should be maintained. However, as the number of Member Churches has grown from five to twelve, it has become clear that the reading of the reports aloud during the meeting is perhaps not the best use of the precious limited time the delegates have to be together. Accordingly, the Committee is recommending that, instead of the delegations continuing the practice of preparing their reports in a (sometimes lengthy) narrative format to be read aloud to the annual meeting, the Member Churches be encouraged to prepare their reports in a summarized or bullet-item format whenever possible (including website links to relevant documents) so that the time available for discussion during the meeting may be focused on the matters that will be most useful to the churches in their work of advising, counseling, and cooperating with each other. To that end, the Committee has prepared a *Suggested Form for Member Church Reports*, which it would encourage the delegations to employ, at least as a starting point. We would suggest that, as delegations present their oral remarks on their reports,<sup>1</sup> they focus largely on those summary or bullet items which they believe would be most conducive to further discussion by the meeting. The Committee would also suggest that the Interim Committee, in proposing the docket for the meeting, include with it an assignment to another delegation (other than the one presently reporting) the responsibility to prepare a couple of questions concerning the report, as well as to lead the meeting in prayer for the church at the conclusion of the meeting's consideration of its report.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. Extension of the Duration of the Annual Meeting

The Committee is recommending that an additional day be added to the annual meeting of NAPARC to make the time of the annual NAPARC meeting more profitable towards the accomplishment of the purposes of NAPARC, including:

---

<sup>1</sup> The reports themselves having been distributed to the delegations in a timely manner before the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Bylaws IV*, “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.” One logical manner to proceed in making such assignment, assuming the churches are reporting in alphabetical order, would be to have the church immediately preceding the reporting church (alphabetically) be assigned responsibility of both preparing the questions concerning the report and of leading the meeting in prayer at the conclusion thereof.

- Allowing sufficient time during the reports of the Member Churches for discussion of major issues arising during the course of the reports;
- Increasing the time allotted to recesses for meals to allow greater opportunity for bilateral meetings of the delegations of the Member Churches;
- The addition of a worship service; and
- The addition of a speaker on cultural issues of the day facing the Member Churches.

Presently, the plenary sessions of the annual meeting of NAPARC allow for up to five and one-half hours of meeting time to consider the items listed on the Docket. ... To make better provision for the inclusion of the bulleted items listed above, the Committee recommends that a second day be added to the annual meeting (such that the schedule for the plenary sessions of the annual meeting be adjusted to something like the following):

<u>Day</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u># Meeting Hours</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Tuesday	2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	2½	net of ½ hour for break
	Evening		worship service
Wednesday	10:00 – 12:00 p.m.	2	
	2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	2½	net of ½ hour for break
	Evening		speaker provided by host
Thursday	10:00 – 12:00 p.m.	<u>2</u>	
	Total # hours:	<u>9</u>	

a. More Opportunities for Bilateral Meetings of Delegations

Assuming that the meeting of the Interim Committee (which immediately precedes the annual meeting) adjourns on time, the new schedule would significantly increase the meeting time in the plenary sessions (from five and one-half to nine hours); provide six two-hour blocks of time for bilateral meetings (lunch and dinner times on Tuesday; breakfast, lunch, and dinner times on Wednesday; and breakfast time on Thursday); and provide occasions for a worship service on the first evening and a speaker on the second evening, and increase the opportunities for informal fellowship around both.

b. Inclusion of a Public Worship Service

Noting that—

- all saints are united to Jesus Christ their Lord by His Spirit and by faith, and to one another in love, and are obliged to the performance of such duties (public and private) as do conduce to their mutual good (*cf.* WCF 26.1);
- saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God (*cf.* WCF 26.2; BC 28);
- it is unto the catholic visible Church that Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life (*cf.* WCF 25.1; BC 30);
- the basis of NAPARC includes the “hold[ing] out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice” (*Constitution, II*)

—the Committee is recommending that a public worship service be conducted on the evening of the first day of the annual meeting of NAPARC, as follows:

1. That the host Member Church request a session/consistory of one of its nearby congregations to call and conduct a public service for the worship of God at an appropriate time following the evening meal;

2. That the service include the reading and preaching of Scripture (by a minister of the host Member Church), prayer, singing, and (if the session/consistory conducting the service so chooses) an offering (for a beneficiary of its choosing);
3. That members of nearby NAPARC congregations be invited to attend the service; and
4. That the congregation at which such service is conducted also be requested to provide some light refreshments following the service so as to provide an opportunity to promote fellowship among the gathered saints.

c. Inclusion of an Annual Lecture

The Committee discussed several ideas for ways in which the Member Churches might encourage one another in their witness to our North American culture. Given the blessings our Lord has bestowed on the Member Churches, particularly in terms of godly men who are well qualified to bring the Word of God to bear upon the challenges of our culture, the Committee is recommending:

1. That the host Member Church be requested to arrange a program for the Wednesday evening during the meeting, featuring a speaker who would bring a lecture on a particular issue, ordinarily arising out of the challenges in our North American culture today, and prepare some questions for a time of discussion thereafter (not to exceed ninety minutes total for both the lecture and the discussion); and
2. That, subject to the approval of the Interim Committee, the recorded lecture be posted on the NAPARC Website.