

Council Minutes
Forty-Seventh Meeting
North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
 meeting at the
Sonesta Hotel - Atlanta Airport North
1325 Virginia Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30344
Hosted by the Presbyterian Church in America
November 8, 2022, 2:00 PM – November 10, 2022

ARTICLE 1 CALL TO ORDER

The 47th annual meeting of NAPARC is hosted by the Presbyterian Church in American and convened at Sonesta Hotel – Atlanta Airport North on Tuesday, November 8, 2022. The Chairman, Dr. Bryan Chapell, calls the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomes the delegates, observers, and visitors. He recites Psalm 100 and he leads in prayer. Angela Nantz, Event Coordinator for the PCA, makes announcements regarding meals, meeting rooms, parking, and other logistical matters.

ARTICLE 2 ROLL CALL

A. Member Churches

The Chairman calls upon the delegations to introduce themselves. The following are present.

MEMBER CHURCH	DELEGATES
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)	Rev. Benjamin Glaser Rev. Dr. William Vandoodewaard Rev. Soku (Seth) Yi
Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)	Rev. Marc Jagt Rev. Jeff Temple Rev Steve Vandevelde Mr. Otto Bouwman
Reformed Church of Quebec / Église réformée du Québec (ERQ)	Rev. Karis Mpindi Rev Blaise Désiré Tsabang Fomena
Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)	Mr. Edward Laman Rev. David Van Brugge Rev. Gerald R. Procee Rev. Joel Overduin
Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)	Mr. Corney Les Dr. Mark Kelderman Dr. Martin Faasse
Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)	Dr. S. Steve Park Rev. James K. Kim
Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA)	Rev. Nathan Hahn Rev. Andy Tschong Rev. Joseph Kim
Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)	Mr. Mark T. Bube Dr. L. Anthony Curto Rev. Anthony Phelps Mr. John H. Terpstra
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Dr. Bryan Chapell Dr. Dennis Watts Mr. Billy Ball
Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC)	Rev. Michael Ives Rev. Tim Worrell
Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)	Dr. J. P. Mosley Rev. Michael McGee Rev. Jeff Munive

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA)	Rev. Bruce Parnell Rev. Bruce Backensto Mr. Drew Gordon Mr. Dean McHenry
United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)	Rev. Todd De Rooy Rev. Steve Swets Rev. Bill Boekestein Rev. Casey Freswick

B. Official Observers

The Chairman calls upon the official observers (invited, non-Member Churches) to introduce their representatives. The following are present.

OBSERVER CHURCH	OBSERVERS
Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRCA)	Mr. David Kregel Rev. Carl Haak
Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC)	Rev. Dr. Kevin M. Backus Rev. Tito Lyro

ARTICLE 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES (2021)

Recommendation 1 of the Interim Committee is taken up. It recommends that the minutes of the 2021 NAPARC Council be approved. The motion is adopted.

ARTICLE 4 COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING REPORT OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE)

A. The following communications have been received.

1. NAPARC 2022 Delegate and Observer information was received from all churches and published with the Council Docket.
2. Church Reports for 2022 were received (*Bylaws III.2.c*) from all churches and published with the Council Docket.
3. The Foreign Mission Consultation report was received from Mr. Mark Bube and published with the Council Docket.
4. The Website Committee Report was received on time (*Bylaws III.2.c*) and published with the Council Docket. See item VIII below for action.

B. The Report of the Interim Committee from earlier today is received. It contains the following recommendations which it adopted and recommends to the Council for inclusion in the docket.

1. The Interim Committee approved the 2021 NAPARC Council Minutes and recommends their approval by the Council.
2. The Interim Committee approves the Treasurer's Report and recommends the Treasurer's Report to be received by the Council.
3. The Interim Committee approves the Treasurer's Budget with one amendment, that the secretary's expenses be raised to \$1,200 and recommends it to the Council for adoption.
4. The Interim Committee approves the work of the Website Committee and their budget request for \$350 and recommends the budget request to the Council for adoption.
5. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council the reappointment of the members of the Website Committee. (Our Bylaws require annual appointment.)
6. The Interim Committee approves the Question and Prayer Assignment Proposal and recommends it to the Council for adoption with two amendments, that the KPCA (Kosin) pray for the OPC and the ARPC pray for the KPCA (Kosin) and the ERQ will pray for the CanRC and the HRC will pray for the ERQ.
7. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council for discussion the following three topics gleaned from this year's church reports with a maximum of one hour per topic at the Chairman's discretion. [To be taken up under New Business]
 - Pastoral burnout and pastoral care, encouragement
 - Answer the transgender gospel and related issues
 - What are the age limits set for infant baptism in respective churches of NAPARC? How appropriate are those age limits currently set?

8. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council the following slate of officers to be elected:
 - Chairman – Rev. Michael Ives of the Reformed Presbyterian Church
 - Vice Chairman – Rev. Dr. J. P. Mosley of the Reformed Church in the US
 - Secretary – Rev. Ralph Pontier
 - Treasurer – Rev. Todd De Rooy
9. The Interim Committee recommends to the Council that the Council Docket be adopted with the addition of the recommendations of the Interim Committee.
10. The Interim Committee informs the Council that it has approved a motion to extend invitations to the Protestant Reformed Churches in America and the Bible Presbyterian Church to send (at their own expense) official observers to NAPARC 2023. [Bylaws VI.4.l&m give authority to the Interim Committee to extend invitations to non-Member Churches.]

ARTICLE 6 ADOPTION OF THE DOCKET

Recommendation 9 of the Interim Committee to approve the Docket with addition of the recommendations of the Interim Committee is taken up and supported. The recommendation is adopted.

ARTICLE 7 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. Recommendation 8 of the Interim Committee to elect a slate of officers is taken up. The entire slate is elected.
- B. The following are elected as officers for the coming year.
 1. Chairman – Rev. Michael Ives of the Presbyterian Reformed Church
 2. Vice-Chairman – Dr. J. P. Mosley of the Reformed Church in the US
 3. Secretary – Rev. Ralph Pontier
 4. Treasurer – Rev. Todd De Rooy
- C. Rev. Michael Ives assumes the chair.

ARTICLE 8 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. There are None.

ARTICLE 9 REPORTS FROM MEMBER CHURCHES

- A. Recommendation 6 of the Interim Committee to approve the *Question and Prayer Assignment Proposals* is taken up and seconded. The schedule, as amended by the Interim Committee, 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	The Questioner and the One Who Prays
ARPC – Rev. Benjamin Glasser	URCNA – Rev. Steve Swets
CanRC – Rev. Marc Jagt	ERQ – Rev. Karis Mpindi
ERQ – Rev. Karis Mpindi	HRC – Dr. Mark Kelderman
FRCNA – Mr. Edward Lamán	OPC – Rev. Anthony Phelps
HRC – Mr. Corney Les	BPC – Dr. Kevin Backus
KAPC – Rev. Dr. S. Steve Park	RPCNA – Mr. Drew Gordon asks questions and Rev. Bruce Backensto prays
KPCA (Kosin) – Rev. Andy Tschong	ARPC – Rev. Benjamin Glasser

- C. The Council recesses for supper. Rev. Jeff Temple leads in closing prayer and prayer for the evening meal. The delegates enjoy a delicious meal. The delegates, guests, and visitors gather for a

devotional service led by Dr. Bryan Chapell, with worship music by Rev. Luke Brodine, and a devotional by Dr. Jimmy Agan – “Thorns of Grace: God’s Plan for Thriving Leaders and Churches.”

- D. The Council reconvenes at 10:00 am Wednesday morning. The Chairman reads Psalm 133 and leads in prayer.
- E. The reports of the Member Churches continue.

The Reporter	The Questioner Who Also Prays
OPC – Mr. Mark Bube	KPCA (Kosin) – Rev. Andy Tschong
PCA – Dr. Bryan Chapell	CanRC – Rev. Jeff Temple
PresRC – Rev. Tim Worrell	PRCNA – Rev. Carl Haak
RCUS – Dr. J. P. Mosley	PCA – Mr. Billy Ball

- F. The assembly breaks for lunch and reconvenes at 2:00 p.m. At the request of the chairman, Rev. Ralph Pontier opens in prayer and prays especially for the Dr. L. Roy Taylor who was unable to attend because of illness. The reports from the Member Churches are concluded with two more reports.

The Reporter	The Questioner Who Also Prays
RPCNA – Rev. Bruce Parnell	RCUS – Dr. J. P. Mosley
URCNA – Rev. Casey Freswick	KAPC – Rev. James K. Kim

ARTICLE 10 REPORTS FROM OFFICIAL OBSERVER CHURCHES

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

The Reporter	The Questioner Who Also Prays
PRCA – Rev. Carl Haak	FRCNA – Rev. Joel Overduin
BPC – Rev. Dr. Kevin M. Backus	PresRC – Rev. Tim Worrell

ARTICLE 11

- A. A motion is made and supported to suspend the order of the day and take up the first topic of new business (Recommendation 7 of the Interim Committee) – a discussion of ministerial burnout/pastoral well-being since we have a guest among us today, Rev. Jon Medlock, of Geneva Benefits Group (an agency of the PCA) who can address us knowledgably on the topic. The motion includes giving him 20 minutes of the hour which the Interim Committee designated for this topic. Motion adopted.
- B. Rev. Jon Medlock presents the findings of a study on ministerial burnout.
 - 1. Rev. Medlock was trained as a lawyer, served as a pastor for 15 years, and now works at Geneva Benefits Group.
 - 2. What does it take for pastors to survive and thrive the difficult road of pastoral ministry? This has been a matter of study for almost 25 years.
 - 3. He did a research project surveying 900 PCA pastors in this area. He did focus groups with 90 of them. Some of the things that can be done to promote wellbeing are:
 - a. Spiritual formation. How is the pastor’s walk with Jesus? Does he access the means of grace for his own soul, for his own spiritual growth?
 - b. Marriage and family. How is his relationship with his wife and children? Is he the kind of husband and father that helps them grow in their love for the Lord.
 - c. Self-stewardship. Does he understand his own physical needs. Is he taking a weekly sabbath rest, exercising regularly, sleeping well, and getting regular medical checkups?
 - d. Emotional intelligence. Does he know how he comes across to others? If others are angry at him, can he control his response so their emotions don’t control him.
 - e. Cultural intelligence. Can he hold onto his own beliefs while dealing with people of different cultural/worldview orientation?

- f. Leadership and management. Can he organize all that needs to be done? Can he attend to the myriad details of leading a congregation?
 - g. Financial wellness. Is he paid enough to minister in the community where he lives? Is he saving for retirement? Can he make long range plans for himself and the church?
 - h. All the above are goals for which to strive.
4. He found that pastors are isolated and feel lonely and that congregations don't understand what it's like to be a pastor. Don't understand that the pastor is always the pastor in every social context. Pastors' wives feel as if they are constantly being judged. Pastors struggle to find friends.
- a. Regarding marriage, an overwhelming number of pastors (80%) say they have good marriages but as a couple they feel isolated (66%).
 - b. About 70% said the demands of the pastorate impede their own spiritual growth. That seems counter intuitive, like an accountant saying that his job prevents him from balancing his checkbook, but it happens because pastors tend to root their identity in their performance rather than in Christ. Doing the work becomes a means of self-justification rather than motivated by love in gratitude for free grace.
 - c. Emotional intelligence – pastors are good at attending to the emotions of others but not in understanding their own emotional states. Is he being overcome by my fears, anxieties, anger?
 - d. The importance of a spouse – she can call him out; she can give him insight into himself. A good wife is a great asset for wellbeing.
 - e. The profitability of counseling – this has proved very helpful especially if it is done before a crisis. Treat counseling like changing the oil regularly. Don't wait till the engine seizes up.
 - f. Boundaries and rest. Pastors need them – especially a day off each week.
 - g. Pastoral sabbaticals should be built into the calling process.
 - h. Pastors should get into peer cohorts, people whom they can trust and confide in. People with whom they don't have to be pastor.

B. Questions

1. Is social media a means of establishing community? Rev. Medlock does not recommend it for that purpose. He uses it only for keeping in touch with family.
2. How can we help ministerial students understand the nature of the ministry and prepare properly for it? Some seminaries are awakening to this need. Geneva Benefits Group seeks to make presentations in seminaries. Mentoring students by experienced pastors should be part of every seminary program. "Pastoral well-being is a team sport."
3. The HRC has a two-year mentoring program for every newly ordained minister.
4. CCEF of Philadelphia provides good counseling for pastors.
5. How can the pastor and elders educate the congregation regarding what to expect from a pastor. This is the empathy gap. A congregation of 100 adults has 100 different ideas of what the pastor should be. Part of the answer is a good written job description made explicate and public. A study of pastoral responsibilities identified 80 different capabilities a pastor needs to be a good pastor.
6. It is expressed that we need to remember that our justification is in Christ alone and not in our work. When we think we are justified by what we do, we are afraid to admit to ourselves, let alone to others, that we are weak and in need of help. We think that the truly spiritual are supposed to have it all together and if we admit otherwise, we are unspiritual or impious.
7. Has any study been done on how congregations are affected when a pastor is not attending to his own wellbeing? Some think the church's spiritual health will never be better than that of its pastor. A healthy pastor results in a healthy church. Likewise, a healthy church is a benefit to its secular community, even financially. How much is it worth to a community to save a marriage; how much is it worth when a kid decides not to get on drugs; when community groups have a safe place to meet?
8. It is expressed that sessions need help in understanding and pastors are not in a good position to advocate for themselves.

9. How can pastors help their wives and children not be adversely affected by his pastoral ministry and help them grow. The best way to help others grow is to grow yourself. Ask your wife, “How am I coming across?” and listen. When she sees that you make yourself vulnerable, she will be more open to do the same and you can grow together.
- C. Rev. Karis Mpindi leads in prayer for the evening meal and the assembly recesses for supper and the evening program. The delegates, observers, and other guests enjoy a delicious meal
- D. After dinner there is a program sponsored by Geneva Benefits. The speaker is Rev. Dr. R. Carlton Wynne – “Human Design from a Theological Perspective”.
- E. The assembly reconvenes at 10:00 am on Thursday. The chairman opens by reading Psalm 125 and he leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 12 DISCUSSION REGARDING PROGRESS TOWARD ORGANIC UNION (AS PROPOSED BY THE INTERIM COMMITTEE)

Nothing has been proposed.

ARTICLE 13 FINANCIAL MATTERS (TREASURER'S REPORT, BUDGET, AND AUDITORS' REPORT)

- A. Interim Committee Recommendation 2 to consider the Treasurer's Report for adoption is taken up.
 1. The Treasurer reads his report and answers questions.
 2. The recommendation to receive the Treasurer's Report is considered and adopted.
- B. Interim Committee Recommendation 3 that the Treasurer's budget as amended be approved is taken up.
 1. The Treasurer explains the budget and answers questions. The dues remain the same at \$1,000US per Member Church.
 2. The recommendation to approve the budget as amended is adopted.
- C. The Internal Review Committee (last year's Chairman and Vice-Chairman) report that the financial records are in good order. It is moved and supported to approve the internal review of the treasurer's records by the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The motion is adopted.

ARTICLE 14 REPORTS AND APPOINTMENTS OF OPERATING COMMITTEES

- A. Interim Committee Recommendation 4 to receive the Website Committee report and approve the budget request is taken up.
 1. Mr. Mark Bube, Chairman of the Website Committee, presents the committee's report and request for a budget of \$350.
 2. The recommendation to receive the report of the Website Committee and approve the Website Committee's budget is adopted.
 3. It is moved and supported to reappoint the members of the Website Committee since they are subject to annual reappointment. The motion is adopted.

ARTICLE 15 OLD BUSINESS (NONE)

ARTICLE 16 REPORTS OF STUDY COMMITTEES (NONE)

ARTICLE 17 REPORTS OF CONFERENCES (NONE)

ARTICLE 18 REPORTS ON CONSULTATIONS (AND, WHERE CONVENIENT, APPOINTMENT OF HOST AND CONVENER FOR NEXT CONSULTATION)

- A. World Missions
 1. Mr. Mark Bube presents the report which was attached to the Docket (page 43) and answers questions.
 2. The next such NAPARC Joint Consultation is scheduled for September 19-22, 2023, with Mr. Bube as the chairman for the WMA, and Mr. David P. Nakhla as the chairman for the DMA.
- B. Christian/Church Education – none
- C. Relief/Diaconal Ministries – held in conjunction with the World Missions Consultation and included in their report

- D. Theological Training – none
- E. Youth Ministries – none

ARTICLE 19 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT (2023) MEETING

- A. The next scheduled host (in the alpha listing) is Presbyterian Reformed Church.
- B. Place: Warwick, Rhode Island
- C. Date: Second Tuesday of November (*Bylaws* I.1): November 14-16, 2023
- D. Invitees: The Interim Committee has approved inviting official observers from the Protestant Reformed Churches in America and the Bible Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 20 NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recommendation 7 of the Interim Committee is taken up and adopted. Discussion is held on the remaining two topics.
 - 1. Topic 2: Answer to the gender gospel and related issues.
 - Speaker 1 – A pressing issue. Between 2009-2019 the number of girls with gender dysphoria has grown by 2,000%. There are legal as well as theological and pastoral issues requiring attention.
 - Speaker 2 – NAPARC has in the past had studies committee. Perhaps we should think about another study committee for this subject.
 - Speaker 3 – The URCNA has just appointed such a committee. Its report might be available in 2024.
 - Speaker 4 – Carl R. Trueman has a book on the subject, [*Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution*](#), March 2022. It is suitable for adult Sunday School. Also, Rev. Chris Gordon (URCNA, Escondido CA), has published a new catechism on gender issues – a positive biblical affirmation of human sexuality, [*The New Reformation Catechism on Human Sexuality*](#).
 - Speaker 5 – The RPCNA recommends [*Gender As Calling: The Gospel & Gender Identity*](#) (2016)
 - Speaker 6 – Abbigail Schrier has a useful book, [*Irreversible Damage, The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*](#), June 2020.
 - Speaker 7 – The PCA has a report on this issue, two years old, on their website, the [*Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality*](#).
 - Speaker 8 – Canada is dealing with conversion therapy bans. Five churches in Ontario have banded together and are working with a legal group to design strategies to protect the churches.
 - Speaker 9 – The Christian Counseling and Education Foundation ([*CCEF*](#)) has resources on their website dealing with conversion therapy.
 - Speaker 10 – [*Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*](#) is recommended. Also [*Harvest USA*](#) has good resources.
 - 2. It is moved and supported to form a NAPARC study committee dealing with gender issues. The motion is defeated.
 - Speaker 11 – The body is reminded that a list of reports (with hyperlinks) on human sexuality and related issues by Member Churches, was created at the direction of the council and was distributed by the Secretary last year.
 - Speaker 12 – This is a battle for our children, especially through social media. We need to instruct our children and guard our children regarding exposure to social media. The chairman asks Rev. Mark Kelderman to lead in prayer regarding the challenges faced by the churches in this matter.
 - 3. Topic 3 – Age limits for infant baptism
 - Speaker 1 – The KAPC has a regulation saying infant baptism may be administered to covenant children two years old or younger. They ask if other denominations have a similar rule and what is your practice.

- Speaker 2 – The URCNA delegate states that their Church Order states that baptism should take place as “soon as feasible.” But when they receive families with unbaptized children, they would baptize them without profession of faith up to about ages 10 -13. A judgment is made whether the child is capable of making a credible profession of faith. If not, they may receive baptism without a profession of faith.
- Speaker 3 – The covenant is made with believers and their children. Whether we baptize them or not, they are in the covenant.
- Speaker 4 – The Bible speaks of household baptisms.
- Speaker 5 – Household baptisms, which are an expression of the covenant, and the age of accountability (or having obtained years of understanding), are the two key issues to be considered in this matter.
- Speaker 6 – The OPC has no specific age for child or infant baptism.
- Speaker 7 – The KAPC says they don’t know where their rule came from.
- Speaker 8 – Perhaps we should consider that children are capable of making a credible profession at an early age. However, one of the downstream results of an early profession of faith is whether that young person is capable of exercising the full responsibilities of church membership.
- Speaker 9 – If parents make a commitment to educate their teenage children in the faith and to encourage them to make a profession of faith, and if the children are not openly rebellious, baptism of those children without profession of faith may be appropriate when having a household baptism of newly converted parents with children.
- Speaker 10 – Perhaps the KAPC could make an exception to the rule – waive it temporarily – due to exceptional circumstances (the pandemic) to allow for baptisms after age two without changing the rule.

ARTICLE 20 ADJOURNMENT

- A. A motion is made and supported to adjourn. The motion is adopted at 11:11 a.m.
- B. The Chairman asks Rev. Bruce Parnell to lead in closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Ralph A. Pontier
Secretary