

NORTH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED COUNCIL

Press Release
November 17, AD 2022

The 47th annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) convened on Tuesday afternoon, November 8, 2022. It was hosted by the Presbyterian Church in America at the Sonesta Airport North Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. The outgoing Chairman, Dr. Bryan Chapell, led the opening devotions.

All 13 Member Churches of NAPARC were represented. The Member Churches 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.

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. Michael Ives of the PresRC. Elected as Vice-chairman was Dr. J. P. Mosley of the RCUS. Rev. Ralph Pontier was elected to a fifth term as Secretary, and Rev. Todd De Rooy was elected to a fourth 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.

The bulk of the work at NAPARC is to hear from the Member Churches about what the Lord is doing in their midst, and to pray for one another after each report. Reports were heard of both spiritual blessings and the struggles of ministry. Many of the blessings concerned progress in the work of missions. Some of the struggles included shrinking rural churches, a decline in men seeking to enter the ministry, and a shortage of men willing to enter world missions. Ministerial fatigue and burnout were also of grave concern.

A devotional service was held on Tuesday evening with Dr. Bryan Chapell leading in prayer for the churches and with Rev. Luke Brodine leading the singing of several hymns. PCA pastor, Rev. Dr. Jimmy Agan spoke on "Thorns of Grace" describing how God uses thorns in the lives of his servants to keep them humble and make them strong.

¹ NAPARC Constitution, II. Basis

After Member Churches gave reports and prayed for one another, three topics of discussion were taken up. They included ministerial burnout or ministerial wellbeing, responding to gender issues, and the maximum age for infant baptism.

The discussion on ministerial burnout included a 20-minute presentation by Rev. Jon Medlock, of Geneva Benefits Group (the retirement and benefits agency of the PCA). Rev. Medlock spearheaded a study of 900 PCA pastors about ministerial wellbeing. He has published on the subject and the fruit of his findings can be found at the Geneva Benefits Group [website](#) including a free downloadable pdf book, *Pastoral Wellbeing – PCA Pastors Reflect on the Tensions of Ministry*.

The second subject focused on resources dealing with gender issues. An index of reports by NAPARC Member Churches about human sexuality, with hyperlinks, is available upon request from the NAPARC [Secretary](#).

The third topic of discussion was a brief survey of Member Churches regarding any age limit for the administration of infant baptism. One Member Church has a rule that infant baptism must be administered before the age of two years, and they wondered if any other Member Church has a similar stipulation. None have. Some stated that in instances of household baptisms of adult converts, children up to ages 10-12 might receive baptism without the children themselves making a profession of faith, although wisdom is required in every situation to determine whether the children have reached years of discernment and might be capable of a credible profession of faith.

On Wednesday evening, we enjoyed another delicious dinner. The meal and after dinner program were sponsored by the Geneva Benefits Group. Rev. Dr. R. Carlton Wynne, an adjunct professor of systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia, spoke on “Human Design from a Theological Perspective.”

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 ten NAPARC Member Church world missions agencies (ARPC, CanRC, FRCNA, HRC, KAPC, OPC, PCA, PresRC, RPCNA, and URCNA) met together for their annual consultation at the OPC’s administration offices in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Joining with them were representatives from three ICRC Member Church world missions agencies (who are not members of NAPARC—CRCI, FRCSA, and SRC) and four NAPARC Member Church diaconal ministries agencies/ministries (FRCSA, HRC, OPC, and URCNA). Also participating were representatives from the BPC world missions agency.

Presentations were made and discussions followed on four topics at the missions consultation:

- Planning for going into and transitioning out of a mission work, in conjunction with training godly leaders in global mission (the Rev. Ian Wildeboer, CanRC);
- Ministry to refugees in war-torn regions: Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and North Africa (South Sudan, Sudan, and Ethiopia) (Mr. David Nakhla, OPC)—which included a special presentation by the Rev. Jonathan Eide, MTW’s country director for Ukraine and Russia (PCA);
- Dependency issues on the mission field (the Rev. Peter Boon, FRCSA); and
- Pastor care of missionaries and their families (the Rev. David Thomae, PCA).

The next such NAPARC Joint Consultation is scheduled for September 19-21, 2023, with Mr. Bube as the chairman 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 Presbyterian Church in America and experienced warm and joyous fellowship with fellow delegates, observers, and other guests.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for November 14-16, 2023, to be hosted in Warwick, Rhode Island, by the Presbyterian Reformed Church.

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