

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NAPARC

### (Excerpted from the Report of the NAPARC Committee of Review to the 38th (2012) Meeting of NAPARC)

Taking note of NAPARC's founding in 1975 (and that 2010 would accordingly be the thirty-fifth anniversary of that event)—and observing that, even as God has continued to be gracious and merciful to His covenant people over the decades, fresh opportunities for and challenges to faithfulness are ripening for NAPARC (including the more than doubling of the number of Member Churches<sup>1</sup> in recent years), as it seeks to advance the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the cause of Christ—the 35th (2009) Meeting of NAPARC determined “to appoint a Committee of Review<sup>2</sup> consisting of five members to *review the [C]onstitution, goals, activities, and meetings of NAPARC* and to report next year.”<sup>3</sup>

## I BRIEF HISTORY OF NAPARC

### A. Formation

The formation of NAPARC perhaps might be traceable to an initiative undertaken by *The Presbyterian Review*<sup>4</sup> to invite several Reformed denominations (or groups within Presbyterian and Reformed denominations) to send representatives to a meeting for the purpose of opening channels of communication between them. The first such meeting was in December 1969, and was followed up by a second meeting in March 1970. Individuals representing the following groups or denominations were present at one or both meetings: ARPC, CRCNA, Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, PCUS, Reformed Church in America, Reformed Episcopal Church, RPCES, RPCNA, and United Presbyterian Church in the USA.<sup>5</sup>

A further meeting of individuals from these groups was held in October 1970, during which the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship (NPRF) was established—as a fellowship of individuals, not of churches—and a steering committee was erected to develop recommendations concerning the purpose, principles of fellowship, organization plans, etc., of the NPRF. In April 1971, the steering committee proposed a constitution<sup>6</sup> for the NPRF, and the incorporation and adoption of bylaws was announced in its October 1971 meeting.

---

<sup>1</sup> From its original five member churches in 1975—two of which were no longer members (one by uniting with another member, and the other by termination)—to twelve member churches in 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee of Review will be referred to hereinafter as “the Committee.”

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of the 35th (2009) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XIV.B, pages 6–7 (emphasis added). This action arose out of a proposal from the Interim Committee “that 30 minutes be set aside, after a brief overview, to discuss the future direction of NAPARC in light of its purpose and function (*Constitution Article II*)” (*Id.*, Article XI, Recommendation 10, page 5). For a copy of the NAPARC *Constitution and Bylaws* (including all amendments through 2010), see APPENDIX 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Memorial to George Aiken Taylor, *Minutes of the 10th (1984) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 18, page 5.

<sup>5</sup> For a list of the NAPARC member churches, together with the abbreviations used in this report, see I.B, below, on page 4.

<sup>6</sup> Which included the following statement of purpose (quoted in the *Minutes of the 38th (1971) General Assembly of the OPC*, page 104):

The purpose of the [NPRF] in this crisis is to join for encouragement and mutual assistance those who seek in our time the unity of a pure witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus

At its meeting in October 1972, the NPRF adopted a resolution which included the following:

God's grace has kindled in our time a new zeal for an uncompromising witness to the whole counsel of God revealed in Scripture and summarized in the historic creeds of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches. New devotion to Jesus Christ as the only Lord and King of His church has quickened concern to maintain the purity of the gospel as the great mark of the church and to proclaim its saving truth in these latter days.

We, of the [NPRF], in our experience of God's work in our time, have come to recognize the necessity of a common bond of counsel among those churches, both established and emerging, that share this conviction and vision.

*We therefore have determined to issue a call to representatives of such churches to explore together the convoking of a national Synod of genuinely Presbyterian and reformed [sic] churches.*

We are bold to issue this call in the conviction that the full spiritual authority exercised in the name of Christ in particular churches (whether denominational or temporarily independent) does not prevent but rather requires taking counsel together with respect to the national service and witness of these churches. *A national synod that did not constitute organic union of its participating churches could nevertheless provide a true spiritual bond for the furthering of the worship and work of these churches and of the church of Christ in America.*

To this end we call a meeting for this purpose [in January 1973 of the correspondence or fraternal relations committees of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches]....<sup>7</sup>

In February 1974, there was an informal meeting of a group of individuals from the CRCNA, OPC, PCA, RPCES, and RPCNA, who were attending a NPRF meeting,<sup>8</sup> during which the group agreed on the following statement:

The sense of this meeting is that it would be desirable to *convoke a plenary session of the full interchurch relations committees* of the respective denominations to explore closer relationships between the denominations.<sup>9</sup>

The meeting of the interchurch relations committees of the five churches<sup>10</sup> was held in October 1974. Three questions were put forward for discussion:

- 1) What developments in the world situation, and particularly in the United States, are likely to affect the life of the Churches in their relations with one another?
- 2) What are the greatest dangers (hindrances, hangups [sic]) to the accomplishment of our joint objectives?

---

Christ in the communion appointed by Christ through His apostles and prophets in the New Testament. Reformed doctrine and presbyterial church government furnish the basis for and the thrust toward a Scriptural ecumenism that is both contemporaneous and dynamic.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in the *Minutes of the 40th (1973) General Assembly of the OPC*, page 139 (emphasis added). (The planned January 1973 meeting was subsequently canceled, but at its February 1973 meeting, the NPRF reaffirmed its October 1972 resolution.)

<sup>8</sup> In the *Minutes of the 1st (1975) Meeting of NAPARC*, the NPRF is referred to as "having been largely responsible for the birth of NAPARC" (page 6).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in the *Minutes of the 42nd (1975) General Assembly of the OPC*, page 151 (emphasis added).

<sup>10</sup> With ARPC committee members also in attendance as observers.

- 3) What are the greatest opportunities (possibilities) for joint accomplishments?<sup>11</sup>

And after a period of small group discussions, the following correlation of the proposals from the small groups was presented:

- I. Major Proposals
  - A. That there be a federation of Presbyterian and Reformed churches (to include the coordination of agencies and the holding of consultative assemblies)
  - B. That the ultimate goal be a union into one church
- II. Elements of cooperation, for immediate adoption, looking forward to federation
  1. The setting up of a clearing house, for information
  2. The publishing of a directory of cooperating churches
  3. The coordinating of matters now under study in the denominations
  4. The meeting of executives and/or five representatives of each agency
  5. The coordination of relief services
  6. The encouragement of cooperative structures at the presbytery level
  7. The striving for cooperation in education: Christian schools
  8. The scheduling of annual church assemblies together, starting 1977
- III. General Proposals
  1. To encourage pulpit exchanges
  2. To carry out theological consultations
- IV. Preliminary steps, involving the joint fraternal committees
  1. That the committees of the respective churches meet annually
  2. That each denomination determine which bodies should be included in the future meetings, and the bases on which such determination is made<sup>12</sup>

A subcommittee (composed of two members from each of the five churches' interchurch relations committees) was then established "to prepare a plan for cooperation and relationship of the respective churches" and to report back within six months "for possible recommendation to the parent bodies."<sup>13</sup> It was also agreed to invite the RCUS to send representatives to participate in future meetings. A draft of a constitution and bylaws for the new body, named "The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council," was appended to the *Minutes* of the meeting.

In January 1975, members of the interchurch relations committees of the five churches (with both ARPC and RCUS committee members in attendance as observers) met and determined "to propose to the respective parent bodies the creation of a North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)."<sup>14</sup> It was also determined:

- To recommend to the respective parent bodies that they accept the Basis of this Council and its Constitution and Bylaws as adopted at this meeting, and agree to the establishment of and participation in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council;

---

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes of the Meeting of the Interchurch Relations Committees of the [NAPARC member churches]*, October 25–26, 1974, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*, at page 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes of the Meeting of the Interchurch Relations Committees of the [NAPARC member churches]*, January 22–23, 1975, page 2.

- To recommend to the various major assemblies that two members and/or executives of each of the following church agencies meet regularly for mutual sharing of plans and consultation: Foreign Missions, Home Missions (Church Extension, Evangelism, etc.), Relief, Church School Education;
- That each church consider inviting two members from each of the Council's churches to be present as fraternal delegates to the major assemblies throughout the sessions of the assemblies with advisory status and the privilege of the floor.<sup>15</sup>

On October 31 – November 1, 1975, the delegates of the five constituent churches (CRCNA, OPC, PCA, RPCES, and RPCNA, with representatives from the ARPC and the RCUS present as observers) met in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, heard the reports of the affirmative actions of the major assemblies, and RESOLVED—

That the delegates of the said churches named above do hereby, by the authority vested in them by their churches, *declare the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council to be duly constituted*. To God be the glory. Amen.<sup>16</sup>

The Proposed Agenda for the meeting included a list of study subjects (both those already completed and ready to be shared and those on which consultation and study is desired) and a list of areas of cooperation (both those already engaged in and those which should be explored).<sup>17</sup> The meeting also determined to “call for a prolonged Concert of Prayer on the part of the Council's Member Churches ..... ”<sup>18</sup>

## B. Membership

The following churches either presently are, or in the past have been, members of NAPARC:

| <u>Abbrev.</u> | <u>Member Church</u>                                | <u>Year<br/>Received</u> |                                   |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ARPC           | The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church          | 1982                     |                                   |
| CanRC          | The Canadian Reformed Churches                      | 2008                     |                                   |
| CRCNA          | The Christian Reformed Church in North America      | 1975                     | (suspended 1998; terminated 2002) |
| ERQ            | The Reformed Church of Quebec                       | 2003                     |                                   |
| FRCNA          | The Free Reformed Churches of North America         | 2006                     |                                   |
| HRC            | The Heritage Reformed Congregations                 | 2007                     |                                   |
| KAPC           | The Korean American Presbyterian Church             | 1982                     |                                   |
| OPC            | The Orthodox Presbyterian Church                    | 1975                     |                                   |
| PCA            | The Presbyterian Church in America                  | 1975                     |                                   |
| PresRC         | The Presbyterian Reformed Church                    | 2009                     |                                   |
| RCUS           | The Reformed Church in the United States            | 1995                     |                                   |
| RPCES          | The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod | 1975                     | (merged into PCA 1982)            |
| RPCNA          | The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America   | 1975                     |                                   |

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*, at page 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Minutes of the 1st Meeting (1975) of NAPARC*, page 3 (emphasis added).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*, at page 5; for the text of those two lists, see APPENDIX 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*, at page 9.

| <u>Abbrev.</u> | <u>Member Church</u>                          | <u>Year Received</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| URCNA          | The United Reformed Churches in North America | 2005                 |

Viewed chronologically by date of reception,<sup>19</sup> seven years would pass after NAPARC was formed with five Member Churches before another two members would be added (and one would cease by virtue of its union with another member); then thirteen years would elapse before another member would be added; then, another seven years later, the membership of one of the founding members would be terminated; and finally, over the course of the seven years 2003–2009, the membership of NAPARC would double with the addition of six new members (at the rate of almost one new member per year).

### C. Actions and Decisions<sup>20</sup>

The adopted Basis of NAPARC contemplates two primary areas of endeavor among the constituent churches:

- Advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one another, and
- Hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.<sup>21</sup>

**1. Advise, Counsel, and Cooperate.** Article IV of NAPARC's *Constitution* provides:

It is understood that all actions and decisions taken are *advisory* in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies.

Early on, as it considered its "role of authority"<sup>22</sup> in sponsoring conferences, NAPARC added to its *Bylaws* the following section pertaining to the publicizing of conference materials and conclusions, and to its speaking for the Member Churches:

The materials and conclusions are to be considered the property of the several member churches, and may be used and publicized by them only in their own name unless approved by other member churches also; joint publicity of the results of the Study Committee or Conferences shall be by the churches themselves as distinguished from

---

<sup>19</sup> Listed in chronological order of reception into membership:

|       |                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1975: | Original five members – CRCNA, OPC, PCA, RPCES, RPCNA |
| 1982: | ARPC and KAPC                                         |
| 1995: | RCUS                                                  |
| 2003: | ERQ                                                   |
| 2005: | URCNA                                                 |
| 2006: | FRCNA                                                 |
| 2007: | HRC                                                   |
| 2008: | CanRC                                                 |
| 2009: | PresRC                                                |

<sup>20</sup> For a summary of the *Minutes of the 1st–36th (1975–2010) Meetings of NAPARC*, see APPENDIX 3. A full set of the *Minutes of the 1st–35th (1975–2009) Meetings of NAPARC* in PDF format may be downloaded at <http://www.naparc.org/downloads/archives/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Constitution*, II (emphasis added).

<sup>22</sup> *Minutes of the 3rd (1977) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 9, page 5.

publicity by NAPARC which is *consultative rather than policy making*. Neither NAPARC nor NAPARC Study Committees or Conferences may speak for the member churches.<sup>23</sup>

And in 2007, while discussing the matter of women in the military, NAPARC agreed “that NAPARC respond to inquiries regarding NAPARC’s position on the matter by listing the relevant adopted statements of the Member Churches including their grounds.”<sup>24</sup>

**a. Ecclesiastical Fellowship.** To help its Member Churches achieve a degree of uniformity in their bilateral relationships with one another, NAPARC, in its second meeting, adopted the following proposal:

That the CRC be thanked for its development of the concept of “Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship” and that a committee, composed of representatives of each constituent body of the Council, be named to consider this concept in a broader context with a view to recommending *a church relationship policy that would be suitable for all the churches* ...<sup>25</sup>

The following year, NAPARC adopted the recommendation of its committee:

That NAPARC recommend the following church relationship policy to its constituent churches:

1. That we acknowledge the Scriptural mandate (Ephesians 4) to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship where it is consistent with Scriptural unity and truth as a visible demonstration of the unity of the church both to the church and to the world.
2. That we define Ecclesiastical Fellowship for NAPARC Churches as follows: Ecclesiastical Fellowship is a relationship in which the churches involved are Reformed in their confessional standards, church order and church life though there may be such differences between them that union is not possible at this time and there might be considerable need for mutual concern and admonition.
3. That where churches enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with other Reformed churches, that relationship be implemented where possible and desirable by:
  - a. Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies
  - b. Occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option)
  - c. Intercommunion (regulated by each session/consistory)
  - d. Joint action in areas of common responsibility
  - e. Communication on issues of joint concern
  - f. The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.
4. That we mutually recognize that the decision to enter into or withdraw from Ecclesiastical Fellowship with another Reformed church shall be decided by each church on an individual basis.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *Bylaws*, V.4.b (emphasis added), adopted in 1978, *Minutes of the 4th (1978) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 8, pages 2–4.

<sup>24</sup> *Minutes of the 33rd (2007) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XI.B, page 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Minutes of the 2nd (1976) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 9, page 3 (emphasis added).

<sup>26</sup> *Minutes of the 3rd (1977) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 13, pages 8–9. The Committee on Ecclesiastical Fellowship prefaced its recommendation with:

It is the understanding of this committee that NAPARC may recommend this report to its constituent churches, *but that the recommendations are not to be considered binding upon member churches*. Rather this report contains guidelines for Ecclesiastical Fellowship which are recommended to NAPARC churches to help to preserve the unity of the church, to protect its diversity, and to encourage and counsel one another as Reformed churches (*Id.*, emphasis added).

And it is your Committee's understanding that several of the NAPARC Member Churches have incorporated much of that recommendation into the structure of their own bilateral relationships with other churches.

**b. Member Church Agencies' Consultations.** Since the amendment to the article in the *Bylaws* pertaining to committees and conferences in 1978,<sup>27</sup> the term "consultation" has been associated with the "annual consultations between agencies of the various NAPARC churches,"<sup>28</sup> while the term "conference" has been associated with gatherings on a more *ad hoc* basis "on subjects of mutual concern to which all Member Churches are urged to send representatives."<sup>29</sup> While the *Minutes* of its meetings reflect annual consultations of the agencies pertaining to foreign missions, home missions, Christian education, and diaconal ministries on a fairly regular basis during NAPARC's early years, the only consultations that have continued to meet regularly on an annual basis have been those of the foreign and home missions agencies<sup>30</sup>—and those consultations have done much to foster greater cooperation among several of the Member Churches in the work of missions.

**c. NAPARC Study Committees and Conferences.** In addition to the Committee on Ecclesiastical Fellowship, NAPARC has established the following committees or conferences to study various matters of mutual concern, including:

- (1976) Office in the church<sup>31</sup>
- (1976) Theological education
- (1976) Racial issues
- (1977) Divorce
- (1979) Hermeneutics<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> *Minutes of the 4th (1978) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 8, pages 2–4.

<sup>28</sup> *Bylaws*, V.3.b.

<sup>29</sup> *Bylaws*, V.3.a.

<sup>30</sup> From time to time, NAPARC has encouraged other agencies of the member churches to meet regularly for consultation; e.g., in 1995, NAPARC adopted the following:

That NAPARC encourage the respective denominational agencies having responsibility for the ministries of church education and North American missions to actively participate in the 1996 annual NAPARC consultations at the senior leadership level" *Minutes of the 21st (1995) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XXI.4, page 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Minutes of the 2nd (1976) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 6, page 2. The conference was planned for two full days and limited to three topics pertaining to office in the church, with the following general structure for the conference:

- 1) A paper be prepared, by a designated person, on each subject to be discussed, and distributed to the conference two months prior to the conference, and that the paper suggest reading material and questions for discussion;
- 2) A brief response paper (two or three pages) be prepared by a designated person, relating to specifics in the master paper, to be distributed two or three weeks prior to the conference;
- 3) At the conference the writer of the master paper give a rationale (not a summary) for his paper in 10 minutes;
- 4) A group discussion of 45–60 minutes be held;
- 5) Plenary discussions then be held for at least three hours;
- 6) A chairman to lead the discussion of each topic be appointed at the time that the writer of the master paper is appointed....

<sup>32</sup> In 1983 the study committee's report "including the testimony and the statement of Dr. Palmer Robertson, [was] sent to the NAPARC churches for study and possible response in accord with the provision of the *Bylaws* V.4.a," *Minutes of the 9th (1983) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 10, page 3.

- (1983) Pornography and obscenity
- (1984) Receiving members under discipline
- (1993) Review relevant CRCNA documents that give the grounds for the opening of the office of elder to women
- (1999) Women in the military
- (2000) Collate the Member Churches' information and develop mutually agreeable definition of "organic union" (2001)

In 1984 it was agreed "that the Council strongly urge the Member Churches that when they plan a study of doctrinal or ethical matters, that they consider asking other NAPARC churches to join them in the study, it being understood that each participating delegation would make its own recommendations to its church."<sup>33</sup>

**d. Sharing of Major Reports of Member Churches' Study Committees.** At the very first meeting of NAPARC, the meeting determined:

- That each delegation should prepare and submit to the Council at its next meeting a list of the completed major reports of its denomination, with references to where it may be found, and that each delegation determine how far back to go chronologically and what constitutes a "major" report;
- That each delegation should furnish to the Council at its next meeting a list of topics that are currently under study in its denomination and that these lists be updated annually by each interchurch relations committee.<sup>34</sup>

In 1981 it was agreed "that the study reports of the various Member Churches that are deemed to be of value to all of NAPARC be circulated to the sister churches."<sup>35</sup> The following year, the *Minutes* record:

That since the previously adopted action of the Council—"That study reports of the various member Churches be circulated to sister Churches" (M7NAPARC, #12)—has not been implemented with great satisfaction, that the following procedure for its effective and orderly implementation be recommended to all Churches:

- a. Each denomination report annually to the [*sic*] NAPARC the subjects of that year's study reports, and where they may be found.
- b. The Secretary of NAPARC compile a list of such reports alphabetically by subject, update it annually, and transmit it to the Stated Clerk of each member denomination.
- c. The Stated Clerk of each denomination send the list to each session/consistory and minister of his Church.<sup>36</sup>

The *Minutes* of NAPARC's 1983 meeting are silent on the matter, but one of the interchurch relations committees of a Member Church included the following in its report to its general assembly: "The list of studies made by NAPARC churches that was distributed at the 1983

---

<sup>33</sup> *Minutes of the 10th (1984) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 10, page 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Minutes of the 1st (1975) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 13, page 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Minutes of the 7th (1981) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 12, page 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Minutes of the 8th (1982) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 7, page 2.

NAPARC meeting is below....”<sup>37</sup> Your Committee could find no reference to a cumulative topical listing since then.

While most of the annual reports of the Member Churches to NAPARC are careful to include a listing of ongoing and just completed study papers, NAPARC’s efforts to produce a cumulative topical listing of the major reports of the Member Churches has proved elusive. There has been some discussion within the NAPARC Website Committee of including such a listing (perhaps one day, together with links to digitized copies of the study papers themselves) on the website, when such a listing might become available.

**e. Establishment of Website.** In 2000 NAPARC approved a recommendation to register the NAPARC domain name and develop a website that would contain NAPARC’s *Constitution* and *Bylaws* and links to the websites of the Member Churches. In 2004 a Website Committee was established,<sup>38</sup> and in 2007 the Website Committee was authorized to appoint a webmaster to work under its oversight.<sup>39</sup> In 2010 NAPARC.org underwent a complete redesign, and digitized copies of the *Minutes of the 1st–35th (1975–2009) Meetings of NAPARC*, the *Constitution* and *Bylaws*, the “Golden Rule” Comity Agreement, and the *NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations* were posted for download; also added was contact information for the Member Churches’ world missions, home missions, Christian education, and diaconal ministries agencies, as well as for the major assemblies’ stated clerks, and the dates and venues of the major assemblies.

**f. Commemoration of Anniversaries of Events in Reformed Church History.** In its thirty-six years of existence, NAPARC has been involved in planning commemorations of:

- 1993 – the 350th anniversary of the seating of the Westminster Assembly
- 2009 – the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin.

And in 2007, NAPARC made a gift to St-Marc’s Church (ERQ) to assist it in promoting Huguenot history as part of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City.<sup>40</sup>

**2. Organic Union.** Although most of the endeavors undertaken by NAPARC over the past thirty-six years may seem to be more directly related to the first area, there were some concrete measures undertaken—most notably the planning for concurrent major assemblies of the Member Churches, all at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, in 1978, 1982, and 1987—to press on towards the organic union of Member Churches. In God’s providence, only one union between Member Churches (the RPCES joined and was received into the PCA in 1982) has come to fruition; two other attempts at church union (between the OPC and the PCA in 1981 and 1986) were approved by one or both of the parties’ major assemblies, but ultimately failed. Since then, while exploratory talks regarding union with another member of NAPARC may have been authorized by one or both of the contemplated parties’ major assemblies, to the

---

<sup>37</sup> *Minutes of the 51st (1984) General Assembly of the OPC*, pages 113–117; for the text of “the list of studies made by NAPARC member churches that was distributed at the 1983 NAPARC meeting,” see APPENDIX 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Minutes of the 30th (2004) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XII.B, page 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Minutes of the 33rd (2007) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article, XI.A, pages 6–7.

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of the 33rd (2007) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XIII.F, pages 8–9.

best of your Committee's knowledge none have progressed to the point where there has been even a unilateral approval by any member's major assembly of a union with another Member Church.<sup>41</sup>

In 1998 the Member Churches were requested to "discuss and draw up concrete proposals regarding how NAPARC can fulfill its 'Purpose and Function' (see NAPARC *Constitution* III) for discussion at the 1999 NAPARC meeting"<sup>42</sup>; and in 1999, NAPARC adopted the following:

We are grateful for the bonds of the gospel and the Reformed Faith that unite us. In the light of the "II. Basis of the Council" (*Constitution of NAPARC*) and in order that all NAPARC member churches may be more fully aware of the unique characteristics of each member church, we recommend that each member church discern and enumerate those issues of belief, practice, and government that, to the best of their knowledge, distinguish them from other NAPARC churches, and submit a report to NAPARC, no later than October 3, 2000, so that NAPARC may evaluate the Biblical and confessional basis for such distinctive positions and *the degree to which these issues necessitate continued separation*.<sup>43</sup>

In 2003 a committee appointed to collate the various reports<sup>44</sup> presented its tabulation of the *Similarities and Differences Among NAPARC Churches* in chart form,<sup>45</sup> together with the following definition of "organic union," which was adopted:

Organic union is defined as two or more NAPARC Churches joining their diverse gifts, heritage and calling on the basis of the Scriptural mandate (Ephesians 4:1–16; Acts 15:1–16:5; John 17; 1 Corinthians 12:12–31) to form one church by uniting together in theology, polity and ministry. This would require the eventual integration of church courts and administrative and legal structures.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> In 2003 the PCA delegation reported that its general assembly had authorized its interchurch relations committee "to begin conversations with other NAPARC denominations with a view toward possible Church Union," but again, your Committee is unaware of any of these conversations having progressed to the point where there has been even a unilateral approval of a union by a major assembly.

<sup>42</sup> *Minutes of the 24th (1998) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XXII.a, page 7. Those *Minutes* also recorded the following list of suggestions for furthering the work of NAPARC:

- a. Have an index of the kinds of work each body is doing in various places.
- b. List books which are on the history of the various churches.
- c. Find out the study papers in each body.
- d. Ask the Interim Committee to consider the matter of staff and secretarial help (*Id.*, Article XXIV).

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes of the 25th (1999) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XVII.C, page 6 (emphasis added). In that same meeting, the PCA delegation brought up the "Godfrey proposal," which it described as a proposal for "a general non-judicial synod of Reformed denominations" (*Id.*, and Paper E), but NAPARC took "no action" with respect to the matter.

<sup>44</sup> The seven member churches presented the reports enumerating their respective distinctives to the 26th (2000) Meeting; these reports (Papers A–G) have been digitized, and are available upon request.

<sup>45</sup> For a copy of the chart, *Similarities and Differences Among NAPARC Churches*, including the 2007 updates, see APPENDIX 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Minutes of the 29th (2003) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article XII.C, page 6, and Paper R.