

**Report to
General Synod Edmonton 2019**

**Committee for
Contact with Churches in North America**

Abbreviations

ARPC	Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CCCA (1998-2007)	Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas
CCCNA	Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
CEIR	Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-church relations (OPC)
CICR	Committee for Inter-church relations (ERQ)
CGK	Christian Reformed Churches (Netherlands)
CRCA	Committee for relations with churches abroad (CanRC)
CPEU	Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity
EF	Ecclesiastical Fellowship
ERQ	Reformed Churches of Quebec
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCNA	Free Reformed Churches of North America
GA	General Assembly (OPC)
HRC	Heritage Reformed Congregations
ICR	Inter-church relations committee (RCUS)
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
IRC	Inter-church relations committee (RPCNA)
KPCA-K	Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)
RCUS	Reformed Church in the United States
RPCNA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
URCNA	United Reformed Churches in North America

Table of Contents

- A. General Report
 - 1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Committee Members
 - 1.2 General Activity
 - 2. General Mandate
 - 3. Subcommittee East
 - 3.1 General Activity
 - 4. Subcommittee West
 - 4.1 General Activity
 - 5. Expenses

- B. Church Reports
 - 1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
 - 2. Free Reformed Churches
 - 3. Heritage Reformed Congregations
 - 4. Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 - 5. Reformed Churches of Quebec
 - 6. Reformed Churches of the United States
 - 7. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

- C. NAPARC Report

- D. Combined CRCA-CCCNA Report

Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
Report to Synod Edmonton 2019

October 29, 2018

Beloved brothers in the Lord,

With brotherly greetings in the name of Christ, we submit our report to General Synod Edmonton, as mandated by General Synod Dunnville 2016. We do so with thanks to God for His blessing upon the numerous brotherly meetings, discussions, and communications that have occurred during the past three years. We trust that the churches will continue to pray for an increase in the unity of the faith among the churches with whom we enjoy ecclesiastical fellowship or other close relations.

We would also like to our express our thanks as a committee for what was stated in Article 49, Consideration 3.3 of General Synod Dunnville 2016, namely, that “When we enter into EF we accept each other as faithful churches without qualifications. Differences that were noted and discussed prior to EF, but which did not hinder entering into EF, do not require resolution. It is incorrect to speak of “outstanding differences.” The word “outstanding” implies a need for resolution. Bringing up these issues repeatedly, without proper proof of necessity, is potentially damaging to sister-church relationships. Discussion of these issues may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific mandate, identifying particular issues, need not be given.” Not mandating our committee to deal with particular issues was well-received by our counter-parts in other churches.

A. General Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Committee Members

General Synod Dunnville 2016 made the following appointments to the CCCNA: (*Acts 2016*, pp. 101-102):

Subcommittee East: the Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt (2019), G. Bos (2022), the Rev. M. Jagt (convenor) (2025), J. Temple (2025)

Subcommittee West: the Rev. S. Vandeveld (2025), H. VanDelden (2019), L. Vanderveen (convenor) (2022), P. Veenendaal (2025)

Recommendation:

Brs. Vandeburgt and VanDelden will complete their terms in 2019. Normally, the committee would recommend that these brothers be discharged from the CCCNA and be thanked for their years of service to the churches as members of this committee. However, in light of the recommendations of the combined CRCA – CCCNA report found elsewhere we recommend that Rev. D. Vandeburgt and br. H. VanDelden be re-appointed to the CCCNA since their significant years of experience would be of great

assistance should General Synod adopt the recommendations of the combined report.

1.2 General activity

Plenary meetings of the CCCNA were held on September 8, 2017 and October 18, 2018 with the following brothers appointed as the executive:

- a. Chairman: Rev. M. Jagt
- b. General Secretary: Rev. D. Vandeburgt
- c. Treasurer: Br. H. Van Delden

Two subcommittees were maintained according to the location of committee members in Ontario and Manitoba, with the exception of Rev. D. Vandeburgt who lives in the west but serves the east; the following division of labour was agreed upon:

Subcommittee East: Contacts with ARP, ERQ, FRC, HRC, KPCA and OPC,
Subcommittee West: Contacts with RCUS, RPCNA, and NAPARC

Minutes of the subcommittee meetings were exchanged via email to promote good communication and mutual scrutiny.

At least two members of each subcommittee were responsible for attending NAPARC in 2016, 2017 and 2018. During NAPARC these members met with their counter-parts. The meetings were as follows:

- a. ERQ – November 8, 2016 and November 16, 2017
- b. FRCNA – November 15, 2017
- c. HRC – November 9, 2016 and November 14, 2017
- d. OPC – November 8, 2016 and November 16, 2017
- e. RCUS – November 8, 2016 and November 14, 2017
- f. RPCNA – November 9, 2016 and November 15, 2017

*The CCCNA finds it difficult to submit its report **six** months prior to the next general synod as this precludes reporting on the annual NAPARC meeting and the bi-laterals held every November prior to the next general synod.*

Four committee members met via video-conference with two members of the CRCA on March 1, 2018. This meeting has resulted in a combined report of the CRCA and the CCCNA that you can find at the end of our report.

2. General Mandate

General Synod Dunnville 2016 (*Acts 2016*, p.37) decided to mandate the CCCNA as follows:

1. To continue contact with all those churches in North America with which we have Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) according to the adopted rules, and in accordance with the mandates described in decisions taken by synod with respect to the churches with

which we have ongoing relationships;

2. To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in the Americas;
3. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas;
4. To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

For the sake of convenience, here follow the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) that the committee applies in fulfilling its mandate. These rules were determined by Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts*, p. 33):

1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.
2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.
4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.
6. In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also when major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.

Recommendation:

That the mandate, as stated by Synod 2016, be continued for the CCCNA until 2022 with one change, namely, to point 4 so that it reads:

*To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work **five** months prior to the convening of the next general synod.*

3. Subcommittee East

3.1 General activity

Meetings of subcommittee East were held on June 23, 2016, March 20, 2018 and October 4, 2018.

Rev. M. Jagt served as chairman; Rev. D. Vandeburgt served as recording and

corresponding secretary.

4. Subcommittee West

4.1 General Activity

Meetings of Subcommittee West were held on June 27, 2016, January 10, 2017, April 26, 2018 and September 12, 2018.

At these meetings, br. L. Vanderveen served as chairman; br. H. VanDelden as corresponding secretary, br. P. Veenendaal as recording secretary and Rev. S. Vandavelde as vice-all.

5. Expenses

From the time of Synod Dunnville 2016, until October 29, 2018, \$ 23514.70 has been spent in fulfilling the mandate.

Respectfully submitted by your committee,

Subcommittee East:

G. Bos (Guelph, ON)
M. Jagt (Fergus, ON)
J. Temple (London, ON)
D. Vandeburgt (Langley, BC)

Subcommittee West:

H. VanDelden (Winnipeg, MB)
S. Vandavelde (Denver, CO)
L. Vanderveen (Carman, MB)
P. Veenendaal (Winnipeg, MB)

B.1 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church

Introduction:

The CanRC does not have EF with the ARP but is a member of NAPARC together with the ARP.

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunnville 2016 gave a general mandate to the committee in art. 49:

- 4.1.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North America;
- 4.1.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
- 4.1.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2017:

- The committee received an invitation from the Inter-church Relations Committee of the ARP to send delegates (as observers) to their 2017 General Synod. Two members of the committee attended and were welcomed by the Moderator of Synod as observers. No fraternal greeting was delivered to the assembly.
- An informal, bi-lateral meeting was held with the ARP delegates to NAPARC in November of 2017.

2018:

- The committee received an invitation from the Inter-church Relations Committee of the ARP to send delegates (as observers) to their 2018 General Synod. A member of the committee attended and was welcomed by the Moderator of Synod as an observer. No fraternal greeting was delivered to the assembly.

Observations:

- The ARP is a denomination with a very long history. There are church communities that can trace their roots back to the days of the American Revolution in the late 18th century. Their heritage is also rooted in England and Scotland – as opposed to our continental heritage.
- As a result of this lengthy history, they often have many small congregations even within a relatively limited geographical region. Families have often been worshipping in a given church for generations and they are emotionally tied to those communities as a result.
- Though there are families with connections to the ARP that stretch back for generations, many of the rank-and-file ARP members have come from fundamentalist/Baptist backgrounds. As a consequence of this diversity of backgrounds, while their pastors know and love the Westminster standards, their members may be less familiar with these documents.
- Broadly speaking, catechism instruction and preaching are not part of their history or current practice. Having said that, in a significant number of congregations, efforts are being made to introduce catechetical instruction for the whole congregation.
- Most ARP churches have a single service on Sundays. Having said that, most ARP congregations also have Sunday school prior to the service – and Sunday school is attended

by all members of the congregation. These Sunday school classes generally involve either Bible study, or doctrinal discussions. As a federation, the ARP produces curriculum to serve as a basis for Sunday school instruction.

- Though the ARP has congregations as far north as Pennsylvania and New York, and as far west as California, they are a deeply southern denomination. Their southern character shapes the way in which they interact with others, including other denominations/federations. They have been exceptionally hospitable in welcoming delegates from sister churches. That hospitality included being welcomed by the Moderator as a guest in both 2017 and 2018 and being included in a dinner hosted for fraternal delegates by the Synod.

- Our brothers and sisters in the ARP are very attached to their institutions, most specifically, Erskine Seminary and Bonclarken Conference Centre.

- A particular high point of the ARP Synod in 2017 involved the “return to the fold” of Erskine Seminary. Erskine had been in the grip of liberalism for some time and a concerted effort was made to bring Erskine under more direct Synodical control and to return it to a conservative, biblical orientation. Much rejoicing occurred at GS 2017 as this long struggle came to an end.

- Historically, the ARP’s closest ecclesiastical relationships have been with the RPCNA. The closeness of this relationship can be seen from the historic decision to leave Bonclarken in 2019 and convene a concurrent Synod with the RPCNA at Geneva College in Pittsburgh. This will be the second time the ARP and RPCNA Synods have met concurrently. They met jointly in 2015 at Bonclarken.

- Like their “cousins” in the RPCNA, the ARP allows women to serve in the office of deacon. Again, as with the RPCNA, they understand the diaconate as a service, rather than an authoritative, office within the church. At a rough guess, some 20% of ARP churches have women serving in the capacity. There are, however, those within the denomination who would like to see this practice reconsidered. That sentiment has been expressed particularly by their Canadian Presbytery. Where women deacons are serving, the motivation may reflect an inability to find men who are willing and able, rather than an explicit desire to see women serving in this capacity. It is also important to note that this practice not only flows out of particular exegetical heritage, but that it long predates emergence of Second Wave Feminism in the twentieth century.

- The ARP as a denomination are active, intentional and deliberate in their efforts at church planting.

- Several churches within the Canadian Presbytery have established Gillespie Academy in Woodstock Ontario. Gillespie Academy offers a one year post-secondary program designed to prepare students for university, future employment, or the building of a Christian home. The number of students enrolling at Gillespie Academy has grown steadily over the past several years. Their numbers have included young people from CanRC churches.

- An informal meeting between the CanRC and ARP delegates was held at NAPARC in 2017. By all accounts, this was a brotherly and productive meeting.

- Dr. T. VanRaalte attended a meeting of Catawba Presbytery in October 2017. A student from CRTS was being taken on as a student-under-care by that Presbytery.

- Chatham CanRC has established a close relationship with Rev. Henry Bartsch who pastors the ARP congregation in Chatham. Rev. Bartsch has helped to support this congregation during the time of their vacancy.

Recommendations:

The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:

- 1. To mandate the committee to
 - 1.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the ARP.
 - 1.2 To submit its report to the churches *five* months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief description of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church:

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>Canada and the United States (9 Churches in the Canadian Presbytery)</i>		
Origin(s)	<i>1782 / Philadelphia – Union of the Associate Presbytery and the Reformed Presbytery</i>		
Confessional Documents	<i>Westminster Standards</i>		
Number of churches & church plants	<i>Approximately 270</i>		
Membership numbers	<i>Approximately 30,000</i>		
Assemblies, number, frequency	<i>Session</i>		<i>Monthly</i>
	<i>Presbytery</i>		<i>Quarterly</i>
	<i>General Synod</i>		<i>Annually</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>Erskine Theological Seminary</i>		

History of the Relationship:

The CanRC and the ARP have had no official history of relationship. The relationship that has grown over the past two years has arisen out of the ecumenical efforts of the ARP that we as committee have sought to reciprocate.

B.2 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Free Reformed Churches of North America

Introduction

The CanRC does not have EF with the FRCNA but is a member of NAPARC together with the FRCNA.

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunnville 2016 gave a general mandate to the committee in art. 49:

- 4.1.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North America;
- 4.1.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
- 4.1.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2017:

- There was an informal lunch meeting at ICRC 2017 between FRC delegates and CanRC delegates of the CRCA and CCCNA
- The committee held a meeting with the FRCNA at NAPARC 2017

Observations

- With our joint membership in both ICRC and NAPARC there has been an opportunity to renew acquaintances with the FRCNA's external relations committee.
- At our meeting on November 15, 2017 we discussed the following:
 - The reasons for the pause in our relationship over the past decade.
 - The perceptions of one another when it comes to the topics of: experiential preaching, the regeneration of infants and what it means that children are sanctified in Christ.
 - The mutual desire on the part of the respective committee members to resume contact and, under the Lord's blessing, have the relationship between our two federations grow, without the pressure of speaking about federative unity.
- General Synod 2018 of the FRCNA decided to resume relationship with the CanRC at their Level One correspondence (See Appendix A for the FRCNA rules for EF).

Recommendations

The CCCNA recommends that synod decide:

1. To mandate the committee to
 - 1.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the FRCNA.
 - 1.2 To accept the invitation of the FRCNA to enter into their Level One correspondence with the CanRC.
 - 1.3 To submit its report to the churches *five* months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief Description of the FRCNA

Source of church data: NAPARC Member Report 2018

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>Canada and the United States of America</i>
Origin(s)	<i>Post WW II immigration from CGK in Netherlands</i>
Confessional Documents	<i>Three Ecumenical Creeds Three Forms of Unity</i>
Number of churches & church plants	<i>21</i>
Membership numbers	<i>5139 members of whom 2849 are communicant</i>
General Assembly	<i>Annually</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary</i>

History of the relationship

The CanRC and the FRCNA had an active working relationship with one another at the federative level for the period 1998-2008 (see decisions below). This relationship broke down towards the end of that period. In 2007 the CanRC, in response to certain concerns of the FRCNA, chose to cease pursuing discussions with the FRCNA until such time as they requested resumption of contact. There was a brief resumption of contact at NAPARC in 2008 but since that time there had been no contact until 2017.

General Synod Decisions Relating to the FRCNA

Acts of Synod 1974, Article 20

- The Church at Lincoln overtures General Synod 1974 to appoint deputies to establish contact with the Free (and Old) Christian Reformed Churches of Canada and the USA (this was the original name of the FRCNA). Synod decided not to grant this request due to insufficient information about these churches.

Acts of Synod 1977, Article 94

- The church at Edmonton overtured Synod to add to the mandate of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad “to take up contact with the Free Reformed Churches Of North America as requested by the church at Lincoln.” Synod denied this request because “no new evidence” for this action was given.

Acts of Synod 1995, Article 52

- Overtures from the church at Aldergrove and the church at Langley requesting Synod to appoint a committee to take up contact with the FRCNA with a view to work towards a union of our respective churches. The overtures were declared inadmissible on the grounds that they had not first come to the minor assemblies.

Acts of Synod 1998, Article 98

- Decision to
 - Take up contact with the External Relations Committee of the FRCNA
 - To initiate fraternal dialogue with the FRCNA with a view towards establishing federative unity

Acts of Synod 2001, Article 92

- Decision
 - To acknowledge that the CanRCs have been received into the stage of ‘limited contact’ of the FRCNA unity guidelines at the FRCNA Synod, May, 2000, and thank the FRCNA for this initiative
 - To receive their delegates at our synods and send copies of our Acts of Synod to them.
 - To continue dialogue with the FRCNA with a view to promoting federative unity, discussing whatever obstacles there may be on this path

Acts of Synod 2004, Article 85

- Decision to mandate the Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU)
 - To continue meeting with the FRCNA with a view to pursuing Ecclesiastical Fellowship, while at the same time promoting and maintaining the desire for federative unity, discussing whatever obstacles there may be on this path;
 - To explore and discuss the matter of federative unity with the FRCNA using as a basis, for example, the document entitled ‘Foundational Principles of Reformed Church Government.’;
 - To encourage the FRCNA to be invited to meetings of Canadian Reformed classes and synods, and to send copies of the *Acts of Synod* to each other with the purpose of pursuing meaningful interactions and discussions with the churches at the local level.

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 105

- Decision
 - To cease from pursuing discussions with the FRCNA
 - To ask the CPEU to send a letter to the FRCNA informing it of this decision and expressing the desire to resume contact when there is interest from their side.

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 30

- Decision
 - To utilize NAPARC to meet with the brothers from the FRCNA within the framework of the basis of the Council
 - To conclude regretfully that our churches at this time have no formal ecclesiastical relations with the FRCNA

APPENDIX A

The Free Reformed Churches have **three levels of contact** with other churches. They are as follows:

LEVEL 1 - LIMITED CONTACT

Level 1 includes the following:

1. sending a delegate(s) to attend each other’s Synods (or equivalent). Visiting delegates attending our Synod may be asked for advice;
2. exchanging copies of the *Acts of Synod* (or equivalent)
3. offering spiritual support. This may include:
 - a. calling attention to each other’s spiritual and ecclesiastical

- problems with mutual efforts toward Scriptural solutions;
- b. warning each other of spiritual dangers which arise and which spread and begin to dominate the church of Christ;
 - c. correcting each other in love regarding any slackening in connection with the confession or practice of “the faith once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3);
4. co-operative activity in areas of common concern. For example: offering material support and co-operation or consultation with regard to mission work, theological education, etc.

LEVEL 2 - LIMITED CORRESPONDENCE

Level 2 includes the following:

1. all privileges outlined in Level 1 (above)
2. access to the Lord’s Supper;
3. permission for visiting ministers to preach on each other’s pulpits.

LEVEL 3 - FULL CORRESPONDENCE

Level 3 includes the following:

1. all privileges outlined in Level 1 and 2 (above)
2. the mutual acceptance of each other’s (membership) attestations;
3. mutually considering each other’s ministers eligible for call;
4. mutual consultation with each other regarding significant actions such as, for example, the revision of the confession or of the Church Order, the extension or modification of a relationship of correspondence, etc.;

NOTE:

1. Agreeing to establish Level 1 contact does not mean either denomination is obligated or even expected to move towards the other two levels. It does, however, open the door for such a level of contact under the blessing of the Lord. Level 1 should primarily be viewed as a communicative level in an official and brotherly manner.
2. Before any level of contact can be established it must be made evident that there is an unreserved commitment to and agreement with (1) the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and, (2) the validity and relevance of the Reformed confessions

B.3 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Heritage Reformed Congregations

Introduction

The CanRC does not have EF with the HRC but is a member of NAPARC together with the HRC.

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunnville 2016 gave a general mandate to the committee in art. 49

- 4.1.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North America;
- 4.1.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
- 4.1.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2016:

- The committee received an invitation to attend the General Synod of the HRC. Two committee members attended and brought greetings.
- The committee held a bi-lateral meeting with the HRC Church Correspondence Committee on November 9, 2016.

2017:

- The committee received a notice from the HRC Church Correspondence Committee that their General Synod 2017 had instructed them to, “contact the Canadian Reformed Churches to discuss the possibility of entering into official ecclesiastical fellowship” with the CanRC. For the HRC that would begin with their Level One Correspondence (see Appendix B below).
- The committee held a bi-lateral meeting with the HRC Church Correspondence Committee on November 14, 2017.

2018:

- The committee received an invitation to attend the General Synod of the HRC. A committee member attended and brought greetings.

Observations

- The HRC was established in 1993 after the Netherlands Reformed Congregations (NRC) underwent a split related to church-orderly and theological issues. The most substantive underlying issue to future HRC members and congregations was Christ-centered preaching, combined with the preaching of an unconditional offer of grace.
- The HRC is confessionally rooted in the Continental Reformation and influenced greatly by English Puritanism. The word "Heritage" in the title reflects a commitment and desire to be true to this legacy.
- With our joint membership in NAPARC there has been a growing relationship between the members of the CCCNA and the HRC Church Correspondence Committee.
- As we have observed the work of the HRC at NAPARC and during their GS it is evident that the HRC are faithful churches of Jesus Christ.

- The meeting with the HRC Church Correspondence Committee on November 9, 2016 was introductory in nature.
- The meeting with the HRC Church Correspondence Committee on November 14, 2017 was more substantive in nature. We discussed their Synod’s instruction to enter into Level One Correspondence with the CanRC. We also discussed ways in which we can at this stage be doing things to promote the cause of our Lord Jesus. The HRC hopes to see NAPARC churches working together in Biblical, reformed, confessional based counseling. Lastly, an inquiry was made on the CanRC view of the child in the covenant. The committee members present referred the HRC brothers to the book, “The Bond of the Covenant within the Bounds of the Confession” with a view to having a further discussion on this topic at our 2018 NAPARC meeting.

Recommendations

The CCCNA recommends that synod decide:

1. To mandate the committee to
 - 1.1 Accept the invitation of the HRC to enter into their Level One correspondence with the CanRC.
 - 1.2 Continue discussions with the HRC with a view towards their Level 2 of EF.
 - 1.3 Submit its report to the churches *five* months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief Description of the HRC

Source of church data: NAPARC Member Report 2018

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>Canada and the United States of America</i>
Origin(s)	<i>Post WW II immigration from CGK in Netherlands</i>
Confessional Documents	<i>Three Ecumenical Creeds Three Forms of Unity Westminster Standards</i>
Number of churches & church plants	<i>9</i>
Membership numbers	<i>2171 members of whom 1271 are communicant</i>
General Assembly	<i>Annually</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary</i>

History of the relationship

The CanRC and the HRC have had no official history of relationship. The relationship that has grown over the past three years has arisen out of the ecumenical efforts of the HRC that we as committee have sought to reciprocate.

Appendix B

Descriptions of Levels of Ecclesiastical Fellowship - HRC As amended by Synod 2014

Level 1: Informal Contact

1. This informal level allows relationships to develop with like-minded churches or denominations without requiring a formal tie. This level includes only informal communication with various churches and denominations around us, both in our local community as well as beyond.
2. There is no obligation or commitment except for us to witness the Reformed Biblical truth to them.
3. Meetings with their representatives are to be held by the Church Correspondence Committee in order to determine if there is sufficient ground to bring a request before Synod that this denomination/congregation ought to be considered eligible to move to the second level of correspondence. Synod must approve of this request before any other level of correspondence can be carried out. These meetings would seek to determine the doctrinal position of the denomination or congregation and whether or not they uphold the Three Forms of Unity and/or the Westminster Standards.

Level 2: Formal Correspondence

1. A church and/or denomination would need to direct its committee representatives to verbally assent to the Formula for Public Declaration of Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity and/or Westminster Standards in behalf their broadest assembly.
2. Copies of the official minutes, without confidential material, of the broadest assemblies are to be sent to each other. A copy of each issue of the official denominational publication is to be sent to one another's consistory members.
3. Representatives of both denominations would continue to meet to determine whether the next level of communication is attainable and desirable and if so, the Church Correspondence Committee would forward this request on to Synod for approval.
4. This is done with the understanding that this level of "Formal Correspondence" must be in place for a minimum of two years before the next level of communication would be considered.

Level 3: Limited Fellowship

At this level there is a formal acknowledgment that the gifts found in each other's churches can be employed in the churches/denominations for the spiritual building up of the kingdom of God. This level would include everything under "Formal Correspondence" and the following:

1. Each individual consistory of the HRC would be free to invite any minister from those denomination(s)/congregation(s) [which have been given classis approval to attain Level 3 correspondence] to preach in their pulpits.
2. Each individual consistory of the HRC would be free to allow any member from these denomination(s) or /congregation(s) [which have been given synodical approval to attain Level 3 correspondence] to attend the Lord's Supper.
3. Mutual agreement is made with the corresponding denomination/congregation, that delegates would be sent to one another's broadest assemblies as advisory members only. This Level of Fellowship may be revoked at any time by Synod.

Level 4: Full Fellowship

1. At this level the realization of Christ's prayer is more fully evidenced.
2. This level includes everything under "Limited Fellowship" as well as:
 - a. Ministers would be considered having full ministerial rights in either federation
 - b. Ministers would be callable from any congregation in either federation without further examination.
3. This full fellowship could include various considerations or stipulations made by both federations in order to arrive at this level. These would mutually be agreed upon by both federations and must not hinder the professed unity expressed.
4. At this point, such fellowship is permanent. This would mean that if either a congregation or the federation departs from the word of God, the recourse is to appeal to the broadest assembly. If no reconciliation is made, sadly, separation must then take place on the basis of the Word of God.

Level 5: Full Union

Full union means that a complete amalgamation of two federation of churches has taken place. Such amalgamation will only be proposed after

1. These federations have functioned harmoniously and efficiently at level 4 for a reasonable period of time
2. Be the result of the Synods of both federations having approved of this by a 2/3 majority
3. Constitute a new denomination with a previously agreed upon:
 - a. Set of doctrinal standards
 - b. Church order
 - c. Ecclesiastical structure (e.g. Classes, Regional Synods, Synods)
4. Be the fullest realization of Christ's prayer that His people be one as He and His Father are one.

B.4 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)

Introduction

The CanRC does not have EF with the KPCA-K but is a member of NAPARC together with the KPCA-K.

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunnville 2016 gave the following mandate in Article 26:

That Synod decide

- 4.1 To express gratitude to the Lord for the establishment of contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-K).
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue dialogue with the KPCA-K where feasible, with a view to getting to know the KPCA-K better over time.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

There was no dialogue or contact with the KPCA-K during this period. The hope is that a bi-lateral meeting will be held at NAPARC 2018.

Recommendations:

The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:

- To mandate the CCCNA to continue dialogue with the KPCA-K where feasible, with a view to getting to know the KPCA-K better over time.

Brief Description of the KPCA-K

Source of church data: NAPARC Member Report 2018

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>Canada and the United States of America</i>
Origin(s)	<i>Immigration from Korea</i>
Confessional Documents	<i>Apostles' Creed Westminster Standards</i>
Number of churches & church plants	<i>149</i>
Membership numbers	<i>Unkown</i>
General Assembly	<i>Annually</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary</i>

History of the Relationship

The KPCA (Kosin) is a daughter church of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin) with whom the Canadian Reformed Churches have had EF since 1992. The KPCA (Kosin) was started in 1985 by the Kosin Korean immigrant community in the United States. Contact between the CanRC and the KPCA (Kosin) was attempted by the CCCA (under synod mandate) in the early 2000's but, due largely to the language barrier, bore little fruit and format attempts were discontinued by Synod Smithers 2007 (see below). After that time some informal acquaintance with the KPCA (Kosin)

began to emerge at NAPARC meetings. This informal acquaintance culminated with an invitation to attend their 30th General Assembly in 2014. Thereafter, we held two bi-lateral meetings with their inter-church relations committee at NAPARC 2014 and 2015.

General Synod Decisions Relating to the KPCA-K

Acts of Synod 2001, Article 74

- To mandate the CCCA to contact the Korean Presbyterian Churches in North America as per information submitted by the church at Willoughby Heights.

Acts of Synod 2004, Article 26

- To mandate the CCCA to contact the Korean Presbyterian Churches in North America with the help of our sister churches in Korea.

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 152

- Synod decide: not to renew the mandate to the CCCA concerning the KPCA

Acts of Synod 2013, Article 78

- That Synod decide to receive the supplementary report of the CCCNA and vote in favour of the KPCA's application to NAPARC.

Acts of Synod 2016, Article 26

- That Synod decide
 - 4.1 To express gratitude to the Lord for the establishment of contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-K).
 - 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue dialogue with the KPCA-K where feasible, with a view to getting to know the KPCA-K better over time.

B.5 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Introduction

The CanRC entered into EF with the OPC by a decision of GS 2001 (art. 45).

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunnville 2016 (art 61) mandated the committee with respect to the OPC as follows: “*to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the OPC under the adopted rules.*”

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2016:

- Committee members visited the 83rd GA of the OPC from June 8-11, 2016 and brought fraternal greetings.
- A meeting with the CEIR was held on November 8, 2016 at NAPARC.

2017:

- A fraternal greeting was sent by letter to the 84th GA of the OPC.
- A meeting with the CEIR was held on November 15, 2017 at NAPARC.

2018:

- A committee member visited the 85th GA of the OPC from June 11-15, 2018 and brought fraternal greetings.

Observations

- At the meeting with the CEIR at NAPARC 2016 the CanRC highlighted the decisions of the CanRC Synod 2016. A discussion took place on the Synod’s decision not to enter into EF with the RPCNA. The OPC brothers informed the CCCNA that they are eager to identify a missionary doctor who would be able to labour in Uganda. They also inquired as to what oversight in the mission work in Papua New Guinea looks like.
- At the meeting with the CEIR at NAPARC 2017 a substantive discussion took place on the following items:
 - The CanRC mentioned that they have encouraged awareness of the Grand Forks OPC, ND that the Bismarck OPC, ND is overseeing.
 - The OPC explained the significance of their recent ‘commission’ re: RCN. A commission receives the power of the GA to address something on a contingency basis. It is a very rare action to create a commission. This was only the second time in OPC history that a commission was charged. The reason for this was that a motion to suspend or terminate a member of the ICRC can only be initiated by a member church of ICRC based on a decision by their major assembly. Because of its commission the OPC was the only church able to bring this motion during ICRC 2017. The CanRC expressed thanks for the work of the OPC commission at ICRC while the OPC expressed thanks for CanRC work on the matter and for supporting their motion at ICRC.
 - The OPC asked if the CanRC could cross-pollinate their inter-church relations committees (CRCA and CCCNA) to make it easier for our inter-church relations committees to function together.
 - The Canadian churches in the OPC are expected to form a presbytery in the near

- feature.
- The OPC are in the process of updating their rules for EF so that in situations of non-contact they can scale back a relationship from EF to corresponding relationships.
- A brief discussion took place on the new Trinity Psalter Hymnal as well as on certain challenges/tensions that exist within the CanRC on the topic of songs to be sung in worship.
- The OPC informed us via a letter in January of 2018 that they had updated their rules for EF (see appendix C below)
- The OPC informed us via a letter in August of 2018 that their 85th General Assembly had decided to elect a committee to propose specific linguistic changes to the doctrinal standards of the OPC (see appendix D below)

Recommendations

The CCCNA recommends that synod decide:

1. To continue EF with the OPC under the adopted rules
2. To submit its report to the churches *five* months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief description of OPC

Source of church data: www.opc.org

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>United States and Canada</i>
Origin(s)	<i>1936</i>
Confessional Documents	<i>Three Ecumenical Creeds Westminster Standards</i>
Number of churches & church plants	<i>281 churches & 40 church plants</i>
Membership numbers	<i>31,377 members; 23,032 communicant</i>
Frequency of General Assembly	<i>Annually</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>No denominational seminary; approved list of seminaries and a denominational training institute.</i>

History of the relationship

The OPC made it on to the radar of the CanRC at Synod Hamilton, 1962 via a proposal made by the Regional Synod held in Chatham in 1961. This initial proposal was to seek contact with the OPC. While this proposal was turned down, it resurfaced in 1962 and was accepted at Synod Edmonton 1965. Over time the relationship that developed marked two major milestones. At Synod Coaldale 1977 the CanRC recognized the OPC as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ and at Synod Neerlandia 2001 the CanRC established EF with the OPC. Since that time the Head of the Church has blessed the bond between the CanRC and OPC.

General Synod Decisions Relating to the OPC

Due to the length of material here only the Acts and articles are referenced, not the actual decisions.

- Acts of Synod 1962, Articles 30 and 82 (both in Dutch) and the Short Report Article 12 (in English)
- Acts of Synod 1965, Article 141 (Dutch) and Short Report Article 26 (English)
- Acts of Synod 1968, Article 154
- Acts of Synod 1971, Article 92
- Acts of Synod 1974, Article 149
- Acts of Synod 1977, Article 91
- Acts of Synod 1980, Articles 97 and 152
- Acts of Synod 1983, Article 55
- Acts of Synod 1986, Articles 126-141
- Acts of Synod 1989, Article 94
- Acts of Synod 1992, Article 72
- Acts of Synod 1995, Article 106
- Acts of Synod 1998, Article 130
- Acts of Synod 2001, Article 45
- Acts of Synod 2004, Articles 86 and 88
- Acts of Synod 2007, Article 131
- Acts of Synod 2010, Article 34
- Acts of Synod 2013, Article 42
- Acts of Synod 2016, Article 61

Appendix C

Rules for Ecclesiastical Relationships of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Adopted by the 45th (1978) General Assembly, *Minutes of the 45th (1978) General Assembly*, pages 116-117, 123; and as subsequently amended, *Minutes of the 64th (1997) General Assembly*, Articles 130 and 178, pages 29-31, 53; *Minutes of the 67th (2000) General Assembly*, Articles 149 and 151, pages 36-38; *Minutes of the 73rd (2006) General Assembly*,

Articles 159-161, pages 41-43; *Minutes of the 79th (2012) General Assembly*, Articles 64 and 66, pages 15-18; and *Minutes of the 84th (2017) General Assembly*, Articles 88 and 97, pages 31-34.

- A. That we acknowledge the scriptural mandate (Ephesians 4) to express the unity of the church by entering into fellowship with other churches where it is consistent with biblical unity and truth as a visible demonstration of the unity of the church both to the church and to the world.
- B. That our fellowship with other churches consists in three categories. Decisions to enter into or withdraw from such fellowship shall be decided by each church on an individual basis. Because the undertaking of a bilateral relationship of either Ecclesiastical Fellowship or Corresponding Relations carries with it a commitment of substantial resources—in both time and expense—for its implementation, good stewardship of limited resources

requires that these relationships ordinarily be reserved for situations in which the church seeking an ecclesiastical relationship with the OPC is either geographically proximate to the OPC (i.e., situated in North America), or has some other form of substantial contact or history with the OPC (e.g., missionary endeavors, transfers of members, etc.); other churches seeking an ecclesiastical relationship with the OPC are encouraged to seek membership in the ICRC and thereby enter into a relationship of Ecumenical Contact with the OPC.

With regard to those churches that are not geographically proximate to the OPC with which the OPC has a bilateral relationship, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR) shall periodically review those relationships to ascertain whether the desired substantial contact is being (or given the limited resources, is able to be) maintained. When the CEIR finds that, in God's providence, there has not been the desired significant contact for five or more years, it may propose to the upcoming General Assembly (and consult with its counterpart in the other church prior to doing so) that such Assembly inform the other church that, at the succeeding General Assembly, a proposal to adjust, without prejudice, such bilateral relationship to a relationship of Ecumenical Contact will be docketed for consideration as part of the regular annual report of the CEIR.

1. Ecclesiastical Fellowship is a relationship in which the churches involved are Reformed in their confessional standards, church order and life though there may be such differences between them that union is not possible at this time. It is to be implemented where possible and desirable by;
 - a. Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies
 - b. Occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option)
 - c. Intercommunion, including ready reception of each other's members at the Lord's Supper but not excluding suitable inquiries upon requested transfer of membership, as regulated by each session (consistory)
 - d. Joint action in areas of common responsibility
 - e. Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly before instituting changes in polity, doctrine, or practice that might alter the basis of the fellowship
 - f. The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting Christian unity
 - g. Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another
 - h. Exchange of Minutes (Acts) of the major assemblies
 - i. Exchange of denominational church directories (yearbooks)
 - j. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the confessional standards
 - k. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the (Book or Manual of) Church Order
 - l. Exchange of the most recent denominationally published edition of hymnals or Psalters

2. Corresponding Relations is that relationship in which mutual contact with another church is undertaken to become better acquainted with one another with a view towards entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship at some time in the not-too-distant future. It shall be implemented where possible and desirable by:
 - a. Exchange of official representatives at major assemblies
 - b. Joint action in areas of common responsibility
 - c. Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly before instituting changes in polity, doctrine, or practice that might alter the basis of the relation
 - d. Exchange of Minutes (Acts) of the broadest assemblies
 - e. Exchange of denominational church directories (yearbooks)
 - f. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the confessional standards

- g. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the (Book or Manual of) Church Order
 - h. Exchange of the most recent denominationally published edition of hymnals or Psalters
3. Ecumenical Contact is that relationship in which mutual contact is maintained with other member churches of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and/or the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) with which the OPC does not presently have either Ecclesiastical Fellowship or Corresponding Relations, in fulfillment of our stated "responsibility to call all churches, including our own, to faithfulness in order to seek the unity of the whole church" (Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church, IV. I). It shall be implemented, as appropriate, by:
- a. Meetings, both formal and informal, of delegates to the quadrennial meeting of the Conference/annual meetings of the Council
 - b. Welcome of official observers at the broadest assemblies
 - c. Communication on issues of joint concern
- d. Mutual labors as members of the Conference/Council in discharge of the purposes of the Conference/Council

Appendix D

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ross W. Graham STATED CLERK | statedclerk@opc.org

VIA EMAIL ATTACHMENT *August 28, 2018*

The Canadian and American Reformed Churches
 The Rev. D. Vandeburgt, Secretary Committee for Contact with
 Churches in NA 55 'C' Line
 Orangeville, ON L9W 6C1 Canada

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the strong Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is to inform you that the Eighty-fifth (2018) General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in accordance with Chapter XXXU.3 of our Form of Government, determined to elect a committee of seven members, with two alternates, to propose specific linguistic changes to the doctrinal standards of the OPC (The Confession of Faith and Catechisms). That committee is authorized to propose only such changes as do not change the doctrine or meaning of the standards. The kinds of changes that the Assembly authorizes the special committee to consider are limited to the following:

- a. Morphological changes, such as "executeth" to "executes" and "hath" to "has."
- b. Replacing archaic pronouns, e.g., "thou" to "you."
- c. Replacing obsolete and/or archaic words, e.g., "stews" in LC 139. This includes, as in the example just given, replacing words that are still current in the language but are used in obsolete or archaic senses in the standards.
- d. Substituting a modern translation of the Scriptures for the text of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

In all cases, the committee is to strive to propose changes that preserve the cadence, memorability, and dignified style of the standards.

The Eighty-fifth (2018) General Assembly also determined to notify the member churches of NAP ARC and other appropriate church bodies with which we have fellowship that it has erected a special committee to propose linguistic updating of the doctrinal standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and include details of the specific mandate, and that it welcomes any input that such churches might desire to give with respect to such proposed linguistic revision. Such input from the Canadian and American Reformed Churches should be addressed to the Chairman of our Special Committee on Updating the Language of the Doctrinal Standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dr. David C. Noe dcn3@calvin.edu.

Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross W. Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ross" being the most prominent.

Ross W. Graham

B.6 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Reformed Churches of Quebec

Introduction

The CanRC entered into EF with the ERQ by a decision of GS 2007 (art. 75).

Mandate of GS 2016

GS Dunville 2016 mandate the committee with respect to the ERQ as follows in Art. 59:

- 4.1 To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ);
- 4.2 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the ERQ under the adopted rules;
- 4.3 To involve the fraternal delegates in discussions at synods in such a way as to honour the sister-to-sister-church relationship;
- 4.4 To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their missionary endeavours and special projects.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2016:

- The committee met with the CICR on November 8, 2016 at NAPARC
- The committee sent written greetings to three synode meetings

2017:

- The committee sent a written greeting to synode
- Delegates visited the synode on May 13 and Nov 4, 2017
- The committee met with the CICR on November 16, 2017 at NAPARC
- The committee received and responded to an inquiry from one of the CanRC churches regarding the ERQ decisions on Genesis 1.

2018:

- The committee sent written greetings in response to invitations to two synode meetings.
- The committee sent written greetings to the ERQ Reformation Day and the October 13, 2018 denominational retreat.

Observations

- The relationship with the ERQ is important to the CanRC for our mutual witness in Canada, for encouraging each other in the increasingly secular Canadian society, for contact between office bearers when members move into each other's area, as well as opportunities related to the specific strengths in the French language which the ERQ offers.
- In addition to the above, the relationship is important to the ERQ for the support at broader assemblies, financial support for specific projects, and mutual cooperation.
- Regarding the issue of the interpretation of Genesis 1, the ERQ decided not to make separate doctrinal pronouncements beside the confessions. It did decide to add specific questions regarding this issue during the examination of ministers and elders by the synode. The CanRC delegates were privileged to witness two elder examinations in person.
- The ERQ brothers raised a concern at the bilateral meeting at NAPARC 2017 regarding the

calling of their ministers by CanRC congregations, as the acceptance of such a call has significant implications for a small federation such as the ERQ. In response, the CanRC delegates clarified the calling process, the autonomy of the local congregation, and the responsibility of a minister to consider all aspects of a new call, as well as the existing call to his current congregation.

Recommendations

The CCCNA recommends that synod decide:

1. To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the ERQ under the adopted rules;
2. To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their missionary endeavours and special projects.
3. To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief description of the ERQ

Source of church data: 2018 NAPARC report

Location (description of political & geographical context)	<i>Canada, all congregations in Quebec</i>		
Origin(s)	<i>Diverse</i>		
Confessional Documents	<i>Westminster Confession with Preamble Heidelberg Catechism</i>		
Number of churches & church plants	<i>5 churches</i>		
Membership numbers	<i>363 members of whom 234 are communicant</i>		
Assemblies, number, frequency	<i>Consistory/ Council</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Monthly</i>
	<i>Synode</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Three times/year</i>
Training of Theological Students	<i>Support Institut Farel, Montreal, Quebec</i>		

History of the relationship

The relationship between the CanRC and the ERQ was initially based on contact with the Church of Ottawa, who in 1994 presented a detailed proposal to GS Abbotsford, 1995. Investigations and decisions at subsequent synods resulted in a decision to enter into EF at Synod 2007.

The EF relationship has been a positive one, with regular contact, support for specific ERQ projects, including translation work, short term mission trips for CanRC youth to English Language camps for Quebecois youth, invitations to special events, and pulpit exchange opportunities.

General Synod Decisions Relating to the ERQ

Acts of Synod 1995, Article 73

- to discuss with the deputies of the Église Réformée du Québec the differences in Confession, Church Polity and worship which exist between our two federations;
- to discuss with their deputies their relations with the Christian Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, and evaluate them;
- to further investigate whether it is possible to have the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Église Réformée du Québec as part of the same federation;

- to make use of the report submitted by the church at Ottawa and Classis Ontario North;
- to keep the churches informed about the Église Réformée du Québec so that their financial and other needs as missionary churches can be responded to in a positive manner;

Acts of Synod 1998, Article 97

- To note with gratitude the contact and developing relationship with the ERQ.
- To decline the invitation of the ERQ to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship at this time.
- To re-appoint the committee for contact with the ERQ with the following mandate:
 - 1. To clarify and discuss the points raised in Consideration B (deacons and deaconesses, liturgical forms, order of worship, supervision of the pulpit, Lord's Day observance, fencing of the table, confessional binding) in view of the concerns raised by the churches;
 - To keep the churches informed about the ERQ so that they may be able to respond to financial and other needs of the ERQ;
 - To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made in matters of confession, church polity, and liturgy;
 - To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Synods of the ERQ;

Acts of Synod 2001, Article 22

- To note with gratitude that the ERQ is faithful to the Word of God and brings the Reformed confessions and church order to expression in its own context.
- To thankfully note that progress has been made in advancing the development of the relationship.
- To reappoint the committee to continue developing closer ties with the ERQ with the goal of establishing ecclesiastical fellowship by fulfilling the following mandate:
 - To discuss the differences between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards as found in the "Evaluation of Divergences" received by Synod 1986. Considering the limited resources of the ERQ priority should be placed on discussion and clarification of pulpit supervision, fencing of the Lord's table, and confessional accountability;
 - To work towards formalizing a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules;
 - To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ financially, when needed;
 - To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on matters of confession, church polity, liturgy, and mission;
 - To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend synods of the ERQ;

Acts of Synod 2004, Article 25

- To continue the mandate for the CCCA as it was given in the Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 75

- To enter into a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
- To give the committee the following mandate:
 - To convey this decision to the next ERQ Synode, via the Interchurch Committee.
 - To actively engage in the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
 - To express to the Interchurch Committee a willingness to provide encouragement and assistance in the adoption of the liturgical forms, and in other such matters, and to provide this assistance where possible.
 - To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on further matters of confession, church polity, liturgy, and mission, as per the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
 - To continue discussion when appropriate on existing differences in confession and practice with a particular focus on admission to the Lord's Supper and the supervision of the pulpit.
 - To meet and have contact with the ERQ Interchurch Committee and synods if and when invited.
 - To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ prayerfully, and financially when needed.
 - To encourage the churches to seek out ways and means to develop contacts with individual ERQ churches as is done between Owen Sound and St. Georges.

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 29

- To mandate the CCCNA as follows:
 - To continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
 - To share information about the nature and development of its dialogue with the ERQ.

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 74

- Denied an appeal regarding the decision to establish EF with the ERQ.

Acts of Synod 2013, Article 59

- To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the ERQ;
- To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted rules, giving particular attention to the matters of supervision of the pulpit, admission to the Lord's table and women deacons (in particular, the ordination of) and to provide an account of its dialogue with the ERQ

Acts of Synod 2016, Article 59

- To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ);
- To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the ERQ under the adopted rules;
- To involve the fraternal delegates in discussions at synods in such a way as to honour the sister-to-sister-church relationship;
- To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their

missionary endeavours and special projects.

B.7 Report on the CanRC relationship with the Reformed Church in the United States

Introduction

The CanRC entered into EF with the RCUS a decision of General Synod Neerlandia, 2001(Art. 59).

Mandate of General Synod Dunnville, 2016 (Art. 60)

GS Dunnville 2016 mandated the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2016:

- Fraternal delegate attended RCUS 270th Synod Bakersfield, CA (May 16 – 19, 2016)
- Met with RCUS ICR committee at NAPARC

2017:

- Fraternal delegates attended RCUS 271st Synod, Kansas City, MO (May 15 – 18, 2017)
- Met with RCUS ICR committee at NAPARC

2018:

- Fraternal delegates attended RCUS 272nd Synod, Golden Valley, MN (May 21 – 24, 2018)
- Met with RCUS ICR committee at NAPARC

Observations:

- The RCUS president stated in his report that:
 - *The goal of the church, if it is to be faithful to its Lord, must be to build on that one foundation. We do so by faithfully preaching the Word of God and looking to our invincible Savior to bless our labours (Ephesians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 3:11)*
 - *Our beloved Reformed Church in the United States, like Ezra of old, has seen the good hand of God upon us (Ezra 7:6, 9)*
 - *For a relatively small denomination we aggressively pursue both home missions and foreign missions, and are not afraid to challenge our larger sister-churches to greater fidelity*
- The RCUS has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Canadian Reformed Churches in regard to the issues confronting the RCN, a sister church to both church bodies.
- Being able to support the ministries which the RCUS is involved in from a financial perspective has become a fairly major concern.
- There are many small congregations, predominantly rural, with most of the urban works fairly recent.
- There is concern about declining membership in the RCUS. Two congregations were closed last year.
- Opportunities exist to work together on foreign mission projects, especially in the Philippines.
- The RCUS has singled out and very much appreciates the developing relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. They especially appreciate having fraternal delegates attend for a significant portion of the meeting at both the classis and the synod level meetings.

- Discussions have taken place, and will continue at opportune times, on differing church polity or practices. The important determination is to remain a faithful church within the confines of Scripture and confessions allowing for a unity in the faith with a diversity of practice.
- Based on the rules for EF, the CanRC and the RCUS can effectively assist each other via pulpit exchanges, visiting RCUS churches, participating in youth camps/conferences held by the various churches, and the exchange of articles in magazines supported by church members.

Recommendations:

The CCCNA recommends that synod decide:

1. To continue EF with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) under the adopted rules.
2. To mandate the committee to submit its report to the churches five months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief description of the Reformed Church in the United States

The present-day Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) is the continuing remnant of the German immigrant denomination of the same name which was founded in 1725 by the Rev. John Philip Boehm. The old RCUS continued as a separate denomination until 1933-34 when the larger part of it united with the Evangelical Synod of North America to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church. This new church merged with the Congregational Christian Churches in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ.

One classis - the Eureka Classis - refused to participate in the 1934 merger. This classis continued as a separate entity for the next five decades. During this time, several congregations of like mind have become part of it. The North Dakota Classis dissolved in 1936 and its ministers and churches joined the Eureka Classis. During the 1950s, congregations at Menno, SD; Manitowoc, WI; Garner, IA; Sutton, NE; and Shafter and Bakersfield, CA, which had either left the Evangelical and Reformed Church or had been independent, joined the Eureka Classis. The 1970s welcomed the arrival of several churches from the General Association of Regular Baptists that had become Reformed. In subsequent years, several groups (some as whole congregations) have left the UCC to join the RCUS. Today, the RCUS numbers about forty congregations.

At its annual meeting in 1986, the Eureka Classis dissolved to form the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States. Today, instead of one classis, the RCUS consists of four classes: Covenant East, Northern Plains, South Central and Western. Source: www.rcus.org

Source of church data: **Abstract of the Minutes of the 271st Synod May 15-18, 2017**

Location	<i>United States of America</i>
Origin(s)	<i>German immigrants to USA in early 1700s</i>
Confessional Documents	<i>Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed Three Forms of Unity</i>
Number of churches & church plants	<i>40 churches & 7 formal church plants</i>
Membership numbers	<i>3,634 members of whom 2,831 are communicant</i>

Assemblies, number, frequency	<i>Consistory/ Council</i>	40	<i>as needed</i>
	<i>Classis</i>	4	<i>meets annually</i>
	<i>Regional Synod</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
	<i>General Synod</i>	1	<i>meets Annually</i>
Office bearers	<i>Ministers</i>	55*	<i>*41 active and 14 retired or without charge</i>
	<i>Elders</i>	123	
	<i>Deacons</i>	102	
Training of Theological Students	<i>RCUS supports five seminaries: Greenville Presbyterian Theological, Heidelberg, Mid-America, New Geneva, City (guideline: \$2 pcm for each seminary. Note: Heidelberg Seminary is under the oversight of a local RCUS consistory.</i>		

History of the relationship

The Canadian Reformed Church in Carman had local contact with the RCUS beginning in 1986. This contact was taken over by the General Synod's CRCA (Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad) in 1992. General Synod Neerlandia 2001 extended EF to the RCUS.

General Synod Decisions Relating to the RCUS

Acts of Synod 1989, Article 45

- The first mention of the RCUS can be found where the chairman extends a special welcome to Rev. S. Allison but "as a private visitor ... as there are, as yet, no official contacts between us and the RCUS."

Acts of Synod 1992, Article 79

- The CRCA is mandated to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of EF, making use of the findings of the church at Carman, MB.

Acts of Synod 1995, Article 101

- The CRCA reported that it had not completed its mandate so GS instructed the CRCA to continue the mandate regarding the RCUS initially given to it by GS 1992.

RCUS 251st Synod, 1997

- letter dated Oct 20, 1997 inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches to enter into fraternal (ecclesiastical) relationship with the RCUS.

Acts of Synod 1998, Article 51

- GS declines the invitation but gives instruction to the CRCA (now CCCNA)
 - to continue working towards a relationship of EF with the RCUS,
 - to resolve the matter of proper supervision of the Lord's Supper so only those who confess the Reformed faith will be admitted;
 - to discuss the matter of Sunday observance and the doctrine of the church;
 - to seek clarification of the concept of erasure;
 - to investigate the position of the CRCNA among the NAPARC churches.

Acts of Synod 2001, Article 59

- GS adopts EF with the RCUS but instructs the CCCA to continue discussion on the issues

noted in its Considerations 4.2, 4.4, 4.5

Acts of Synod 2004, Article 24

- GS expresses gratitude to the Lord for the positive developments within our contacts with the RCUS and continues EF with the RCUS with the instruction to continue discussions as noted in its Considerations 4.2 - 4.5.
- It also encourages the Classes to continue to development contact with the Classis of the RCUS bordering their area and to churches to pursue actively our EF with the RCUS via pulpit exchanges, visiting RCUS churches, and invitations to youth camps/conferences held by the various churches.

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 17

- GS continues EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules for EF. GS states, “ As the CCCA fulfills its mandate according to these rules, matters of concern raised by the churches (see Observations 2.7-2.11) may continue to be raised when appropriate.”
- It also instructs the CCCA to endeavour to meet with the RCUS Interchurch Relations Committee at least once a year.

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 28

- GS continues EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules for EF.
- It also instructs the CCCNA to endeavour to meet at least once a year to discuss matters of mutual concern and edification and to share more detailed information with the churches about the nature and the development of its dialogue with the RCUS.

Acts of Synod 2013, Article 93

- GS continues EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules for EF.
- It also instructs the CCCNA to endeavour to meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern and edification, giving attention to the matters of Lord’s Day observance and admission to the Lord’s table.

Acts of Synod 2016, Article 60

- GS continues EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules for EF.

B.8 Report on the CanRC relationship with the RPCNA

Introduction

The CanRC does not have ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA but is a member of NAPARC together with the RPCNA.

Mandate of General Synod Dunnville 2016 (Art. 90)

4.1 To express gratitude for the Reformed doctrine and practice evident in the RPCNA, evident through the contact between the CCCNA and the IRC;

4.2 That the CanRC not enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);

4.3 That the CCCNA interact with the RPCNA at NAPARC.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

2017:

- at their invitation, members of CCCNA attended the RPCNA synod in Marion, IN (June, 2017)
- CCCNA and IRC interacted at NAPARC meeting (November, 2017)

2018:

- at their invitation, members of CCCNA attended the RPCNA synod in Marion, IN (June, 2018)

Observations:

- The CCCNA has twice recommended to a General Synod that EF be extended to the RPCNA. The recommendation was not adopted at GS 2016 with consideration of two issues. The practice of ordaining female deacons (and the exegetical defense thereof) “remains an impediment to EF between the RPCNA and CanRC” as well as reservations about the place and function of *The Testimony* (GS 2016, Art. 90, Consideration 3.2, 3.3, 3.5).
- GS 2016 does acknowledge that the RPCNA can be recognized for their faithfulness to the Word of God and their strong Reformed convictions (GS 2016, Art. 90, Consideration 3.5, Recommendation 4.1)
- The RPCNA have congregations or preaching points within close proximity to CanRC churches in Ottawa, Elora, Fergus, Guelph and Denver. Several of these have expressed a desire for progression towards unity.
- The CCCNA has attended the last two synods of the RPCNA. These were historic "watershed" moments where, among other matters, the RPCNA defended the scriptural position of men only in the teaching offices and upheld the discipline of a presbytery to suspend a retired professor who advocated opening the teaching offices to women. Several RPCNA brothers noted that the acceptance of women as deacons is on the decline in the federation.

Recommendations:

The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:

1. That the CCCNA avail itself of opportunities to interact with the RPCNA such as at the NAPARC to discuss that which hinders EF from being offered to the RPCNA.

- To mandate the committee to submit its report to the churches five months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

Brief description of the RPCNA

The RPCNA was established in North America in 1798, having come from the Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland who originated from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The RPCNA is a member both of the ICRC and NAPARC. It has formal fraternal relations (EF) with a number of churches, including these sister churches of the CanRC: Free Church of Scotland (Synod of North America); OPC; RCUS and the URCNA. Its Synod meets annually, the most recent one having been held in June 2018. Further information about the RPCNA may be obtained by visiting its website: www.reformedpresbyterianchurch.org.

Source of church data: **NAPARC Report Nov 2017**

Location	<i>North America</i>		
Origin(s)	<i>Scottish immigrants to USA in 1798</i>		
Confessional Documents	<i>Westminster Confession of Faith, Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechism, Reformed Presbyterian Testimony</i>		
Number of churches & church plants	<i>98 churches</i>		
Membership numbers	<i>7,076 members of whom 4,886 are communicant</i>		
Assemblies, number, frequency	<i>Session (Consistory)</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>meets monthly</i>
	<i>Presbytery (Classis)</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>meets 2-4x/yr</i>
	<i>Regional Synod</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
	<i>Synod</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>meets annually</i>
Office bearers	<i>Ministers</i>	<i>170</i>	
	<i>Elders</i>	<i>304</i>	
	<i>Deacons</i>	<i>251</i>	
Training of Theological Students	<i>RPCNA sponsors Geneva College and the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania.</i>		

General Synod Decisions Relating to the RPCNA

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 163

The first report giving a detailed overview of the RPCNA was submitted to Synod (Reports Vol 1, p.196-239).

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 77

An investigative report regarding *The Testimony*, women deacons, and exclusive psalmody was submitted to Synod (Reports Vol 1, p.188-222). The committee had recommended inviting the

RPCNA to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship. Synod decided not to enter into EF with the RPCNA at that time.

Acts of Synod 2013, Article 76

The CCCNA submitted a much shorter report to Synod along the same lines. (Reports Vol 1, p.193-194). Synod instructed the CCCNA to further investigate the matters of deacons' ordination, and *The Testimony*.

Acts of Synod 2016, Article 90

The CCCNA investigated in detail (Observation 2.2, 2.3) the matters of ordained women deacons and *The Testimony* and states that there is nothing to be gained by mandating the committee to study the matters further. It recommended inviting the RPCNA to enter into EF. Synod decided not to enter into EF but did mandate the committee to continue its interaction with the RPCNA.

C. NAPARC Report

Introduction

NAPARC is a fellowship of thirteen churches based on subscription and adherence to the Bible as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confessional Standards. Its purpose is to facilitate discussion on common issues, to study matters of shared concern, to exercise the promotion of the Reformed faith, and to promote collaboration, where feasible, in works of mission, relief, etc. Any decisions of NAPARC are advisory only, and do not affect the autonomy of member churches.

The CanRC has been a member of NAPARC since 2008. For further information (on constitution and bylaws, meetings, supporting materials, etc.) see the website: www.naparc.org.

Mandate of GS 2016

General Synod Dunnville 2016 gave the following mandate to the CCCNA concerning NAPARC: (Acts, art 89, pg. 101)

4. Recommendations:

4.1 To thank the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) for representing the CanRC at meetings of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC);

4.2 To approve the changes made to the revised constitution and bylaws of NAPARC;

4.3 To mandate the CCCNA:

4.3.1 To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its active involvement in it;

4.3.2 To convey to NAPARC the approval of the changes made to the revised Constitution and Bylaws of NAPARC;

4.2.3 (sic) To raise in discussion at NAPARC, the application of the “Golden Rule’ Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” as a reminder for the Member Churches;

4.2.4 (sic) To assist the local churches when asked about conflicts with the “Golden Rule’ Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations”;

4.2.5 (sic) To address NAPARC about a lack of definition for the terms “Member Church” and “Unit Vote” in the revised Constitution of NAPARC.

Execution of this mandate in the period summer 2016 to fall 2018

4.3.1: The Committee participated in the annual meetings held each November in 2016, 2017 and will do so again, D.V. in November 2018. Four delegates (two from sub-committee East and two from sub-committee West) were sent to each meeting, of which the main agenda items included reports of each member church on its synod or general assembly, significant decisions, concerns of theological or practical nature, etc. Discussion and prayer followed each federation’s report. A ‘key-note’ address was provided by an invited speaker, which was followed by discussion. Currently, no other federations are applying for membership in NAPARC. At the invitation of NAPARC, the Protestant Reformed Church and the Bible Presbyterian Church have sent observers the past number of years.

4.3.2: The CCCNA secretary conveyed the decision of GS 2016 to the NAPARC secretary in a letter dated July 6th, 2016.

4.2.3: (sic - should be 4.3.3): The committee plans to raise these topics at the plenary session of NAPARC 2018 with the member churches.

4.2.4: (sic - should be 4.3.4) The Committee received one letter seeking advice on the “Golden Rule” Comity Agreement, to which a response was sent. In addition, the Committee sent a letter to Guelph Emmanuel seeking detailed information regarding their concern of the “Golden Rule” Comity Agreement and the Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” which was directly reflected in the mandate we received by Synod Dunnville. (Art 89: Observation 2.9, Consideration 3.3, Recomm. 4.2.4 Synod Dunnville 2016) Our desire was to discuss this at plenary of CCCNA and if necessary address the “offending” church(es) in a brotherly way at NAPARC. No detailed response was received from Guelph.

4.2.5: (sic - should be 4.3.5) The Committee opines that the terminology used in the constitution and bylaws are understandable and reasonable. As the Committee cited in their report to Synod Dunnville 2016 they found the changes to be an improvement and they could in good conscience support them. Although definitions are lacking it is commonly understood and accepted that each church body (e.g. the federation of the CanRC) is a member of NAPARC and as one member it has one voting unit. This understanding is confirmed on the NAPARC website as it lists its thirteen member churches. In matters of importance there are a total of thirteen votes able to be cast, one “unit vote” by each member. GS 2016, as the broadest assembly of the federation of CanRC decided in favour of the proposed changes to the NAPARC constitution. In general matters during the flow of any meeting each delegate will be allowed a vote. As is recognized in the bylaws a simple majority will pass a recommendation.

Observations

Re 4.3.1: The CCCNA continues to see the benefit of being involved in NAPARC, both to derive insights from and to contribute to the Reformed witness of it. As member churches we live in a North American society that is increasingly secular and hostile. It is good to support one another and maintain a united front on the major challenges we face. Reports from member-churches are often relevant to developments or projects of the CanRC and it is useful to discuss these out of common interest.

Besides participating in the meeting of NAPARC, the CCCNA has used the occasion to hold meetings with the Inter-church Relations Committees of the ERQ, OPC, RCUS, RPCNA annually and the KPCA (Kosin) triennially. In addition to meeting with the five mentioned churches the CCCNA has been in contact with the three other churches, the HRC, FRCNA and the ARPC.

We see this efficient and economical arrangement as an additional benefit of membership in NAPARC; moreover, we observe a growing bond among those churches in NAPARC with whom we have EF. There is an Interim Committee that prepares the agenda prior to each NAPARC

meeting and looks after other organizational matters. Br Les Vanderveen, chairman of subcommittee West, serves on this committee.

Re 4.3.2: We highlight the following excerpt from the 2013 CCCNA Report the Synod: The “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” was adopted by NAPARC in 1984 following the recommendation of the representatives of the ‘home missions’ (ie., not foreign missions) agencies that member-churches of NAPARC, when planning mission work, be sensitive to the presence of existing congregations and mission-work of other churches. Out of courtesy and for good working relationships, the home missions’ committees are encouraged to inform each other of their planned activities.

“The Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” was adopted in 1987 to forestall a consistory or presbytery of a member-church from unintentionally receiving into its membership an ordained officer or member who is under discipline, thus creating tension between the churches. Like the Comity Agreement, it is intended to function as a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ for the sake of maintaining good communications, and so, good relations. It has no binding authority upon any member-church of NAPARC.

These agreements are just asking for some sensible contact with neighbouring churches about the establishment of mission posts or the transfer of members. The point is not that we need to “honour” these agreements (in the sense that they are binding upon us), but rather to take them into consideration in contact with NAPARC churches. NAPARC agreements do not supersede our own rules established in the Church Order. The status and implications of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” are governed by the NAPARC Constitution and they should be interpreted in its context.”

The above explains the purpose and authority of the agreement. The practical application of these agreements also needs to be addressed. A NAPARC church very active in its backyard will become well known in the neighbourhood and among other NAPARC churches for its mission activities and its level of evangelism work when a mission area is being selected by another NAPARC member church. As part of the annual report each NAPARC church does inform the other NAPARC churches of its mission activities. Of greater concern is the honour and respect for the church’s office of oversight of its members. Although we do not have EF with every NAPARC member church we would be upset if another church did not respect the work of oversight and discipline from our consistory.

The Committee also brings to the attention of Synod that in order for us to adequately fulfill our mandate, for example recommendations 4.3.3 and 4.3.5, it would be most helpful if more information was provided to the committee in order to address the concern(s) raised. We did request, and receive, the material sent to General Synod by the churches via the General Synod archivist.

Considerations

The Committee considers that it has sufficiently dealt with General Synod 2016 considerations 4.3.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 with the understanding that the CCCNA is always

willing to assist the local churches in regard to NAPARC issues.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that Synod decide:

1. To discharge the Committee from the mandate given it by General Synod 2016
2. To mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its active involvement in it.
3. That the CCCNA submit its report to the churches five months prior to the convening of the next General Synod.

Brief description of NAPARC

Basis:

Confessing Jesus Christ as 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. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of the council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, council, 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.

Purpose and Function:

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common and by the sharing of insights “communicate advantages to one another” (*Institutes* IV, 2, 1).
2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.
3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed faith.
4. Promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, and church education.

Nature and Extent of Authority

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.

Member Churches:

1. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)
2. The Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)
3. The Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)
4. The Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)
5. The Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)
6. The Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)
7. The Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA)
8. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
9. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

10. The Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC)
11. The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)
12. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)
13. The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

General Synod Decisions Relating to NAPARC

Acts of Synod 2001, Article 74

- To allow the CCCA to send an observer, at its own discretion, to future meetings of NAPARC to investigate its usefulness and possible membership in this organization

Acts of Synod 2004, Article 30

- To mandate the CCCA to continue to send an observer to NAPARC, with the instruction to initiate discussion on the matters brought forth in Consideration 4.2. (This dealt with significant duplication in the purpose, function, and membership of NAPARC and the ICRC.)

Acts of Synod 2007, Article 140

- To instruct the CCCA to apply for membership in NAPARC

Acts of Synod 2010, Article 52

- To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC
- To investigate the status and implications of the Golden Rule Comity Agreement and the NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of members and Congregations in order to determine whether or not these agreements interfere with the independence of the CanRC in regard to establishing relations of EF with other federations.

Acts of Synod 2013, Article 77

- To mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its involvement in it;
- To raise in discussion at NAPARC what may be perceived as a tension between Article 4 of the NAPARC constitution on “The Nature and Extent of Authority” and the last sentence of 5.2 on “Membership,” namely “Those churches shall be eligible for membership ... [which] maintain the marks of the true church (re: preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, the faithful exercise of discipline.”)

- **Acts of Synod 2016, Article 89**

- To mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its involvement in it;
- To raise in discussion at NAPARC the application of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on the Transfer of Members and Congregations” as a reminder for the Member Churches and to assist the local churches when asked about conflicts with these agreements

D. Combined Report of the CRCA and CCCNA

Introduction

Currently the execution of CanRC Synod decisions with respect to other churches as per CO article 50 is mandated to four committees:

- The CRCA (Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad)
- The CRCA-SRN (CRCA – Subcommittee Relations (churches in the) in the Netherlands)
- The CCCNA (Committee for Contact with Churches in North America)
- The CCU (Coordinators for Church Unity)

These four committees operate independently of each other. This has proven to be inefficient and cumbersome, and at times even problematic.

For example, issues arise in multi-lateral situations such as the ICRC (International Conference of Reformed Churches) and NAPARC (North American Presbyterian And Reformed Council). GS 2016 (Dunnville) acknowledged this implicitly when it mandated the CRCA to consult with other CanRC inter church relations committees about the delegation to the ICRC. The 4-member delegation to the ICRC consisted of 2 CRCA members, 1 CCCNA member, and 1 CRCA-SRN member (though invited, the CCU did not participate). Your committees found the experience good, and the CCCNA decided that the CRCA could delegate someone to a NAPARC meeting. A similar issue arises when there are concurrent broadest assemblies, such as that of the URCNA and OPC in 2018.

Issues also arise, among others, with respect to inconsistency in policies for other bonds of churches (e.g., whom to invite to our general synods) and lack of knowledge regarding the intricacies and sensitivities of relationships with third parties (e.g. the relationship with the GGRC when talking to the URCNA, or with the GKv when talking to the OPC). Recognizing this, the CRCA and CCCNA arranged a meeting of delegations from the CRCA and the CCCNA. That meeting took place on March 1, 2018, via a video conference call. Minutes of that meeting were reported to the CRCA and CCCNA, and has culminated in this report, which is being submitted by the CRCA and CCCNA together to GS 2019 (Edmonton-Immanuel).

History

GS 1954 (art. 100) created the Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad (CCCA)

GS 1962 (art. 226) created a Committee to Write to the Christian Reformed Church (CRCNA) and continued the CCCA.

GS 1965 (art. 216) continued the CCCA and created two further committees, one for Contact with the CRCNA, the other for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). The Committee for Contact with the CRCNA existed for a short while.

GS 1992 (art. 124) continued the CCCA and CC-OPC, and further created a Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU) to represent the CanRC at the Alliance of Reformed Churches (cf. art. 80). GS 1992 (art. 79) mandated the CCCA to investigate the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).

GS 1995 (art. 118) continued the CCCA, CC-OPC, CPEU, and added a Committee for Contact with the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ).

GS 1998 (art. 143), besides continuing the CPEU, reorganized things somewhat by creating two committees: the CRCA (Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad) and the CCCA (*now*: Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas). For the CCCA three subcommittees were

appointed directly by synod: RCUS, ERQ, and OPC.

GS 2001 (art. 98) continued the CRCA, CCCA, and CPEU. Contact with the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB) arose via the CRCA, GS 2001 (art. 56) determined it would be the domain of the CCCA. The Synod Acts did not report the appointment of subcommittees.

GS 2004 (art. 116) continued the CRCA, CCCA, and CPEU. The index to the Acts suggest that the CCCA mandate now included mandates for: the Independent Presbyterian Churches in Mexico, the Korean Presbyterian Churches in North America, the ERQ, the OPC, the RCUS, and the IRB, as well as NAPARC.

GS 2007 (art. 174) decided to divide the workload somewhat differently again, by appointing a Committee for Church Unity (CCU), a Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA), and a Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA). The CCCNA was split into a subcommittee East and a subcommittee West.

GS 2010 (art. 60) received a recommendation from the CRCA to consolidate and reorganise inter church relations by disbanding the CRCA and CCCNA and create one Committee on Inter-church Relations. As this recommendation did not include comment from the CCCNA and did not clearly have broad support among the churches the proposal was not adopted. GS 2010 (art. 167) continued the CRCA, CCCNA, and CCU, and created the CRCA–Subcommittee for Contact with Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Observations

The CRCA and CCCNA advise that synod include in its observations:

1. The CRCA and CCCNA have provided synod with an overview of the history of inter-church relations as practised by the CanRC since coming into existence.
2. The structural organization of the CanRC interchurch relations committees is as follows.
The CRCA consists of 6 members, and is currently responsible for 8 EF relations (Australia, New Zealand, Scotland (2), South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia, Korea), the ICRC, plus 3 contacts (2 in Korea, 1 in Indonesia)
The CCCNA consists of 8 members, and is currently responsible for 3 EF relations (OPC, RCUS, ERQ), NAPARC, plus all NAPARC member churches (URCNA excepted) as contacts
The CCU consists of 4 members, and is currently responsible for 1 EF relation (URCNA)
The CRCA-SRN consists of 4 members, and is currently responsible for 1 EF relation (GKv), plus 2 contacts (DGK, GKN).
3. (If synod indeed so decides:) The dissolution of the CRCA-SRN will increase the workload of the CRCA.
4. In the past, committees were put together regionally so that members could meet face to face. However, over the past three years, many committee meetings have made efficient use of digital video conferencing technology.¹ Physical distance between members of a committee is no longer a hindrance in performing committee work.
5. In the run up to GS 2016 (Dunnville) there was lack of clarity over who was should be extending invitations to other churches and what materials their delegates should have access to.

¹ During 2016-2019 the CRCA had one member in Houston, BC, one member in Vernon, BC, and four members in the Fraser Valley. Video conferencing is used for at least one if not two members every meeting.

Considerations

The CRCA and CCCNA advise that synod include in its considerations:

1. The workload of maintaining relationships and contacts with other churches is irregularly distributed among the various committees.
2. In 2010 the CRCA recommended consolidation and reorganization of the committees. At that time the CCCNA was unaware of this recommendation, which became a reason for not adopting it. This time the request is coming from the CRCA and CCCNA together.
3. The proposal is not to consolidate and reorganize right now. Rather, it is to mandate a study of how CO article 50 can best be executed. The “history” makes clear that thus far the approach has allowed for inconsistencies between the various committees. Thus a study is warranted.
4. There is not just “one right way” to do inter church relations. Reorganizations have occurred previously in 1998 and 2007.
5. Whatever the outcome of this study, there are a number of practical issues that need to be addressed specifically. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, matters relating to inviting other churches to be present at CanRC general synods, the composition of CanRC delegations to multi-church conferences such as the ICRC and NAPARC, and effectively having only one level of relationship (EF); at times a synod has mandated a committee to maintain contact with another church, without working towards EF.
6. The study should result in recommendations as to how the findings of the study might become part of our ecclesiastical regulations (e.g. Church Order, Rules for EF, Synod Guidelines).

Recommendations

The CRCA and CCCNA recommend that synod decide:

1. To mandate the CanRC inter-church relations committees (CRCA, CCCNA, CRCA-SRN, and CCU²):
 - 1.1. to reflect in consultation with each other on CanRC protocols regarding:
 - 1.1.1 Whom to invite as delegates and whom to invite as observers to our general synods;
 - 1.1.2 Who is responsible for extending this invitation;
 - 1.1.3 What are the rights and privileges of delegates and observers during synod; How are they cared for during the time of synod and how can they interact with synod (members)?
 - 1.1.4 What synod materials are delegates and observers respectively entitled to;
 - 1.1.5 Who is responsible for ensuring delegates and observers receive the materials they are entitled to;
 - 1.1.6 How to have CanRC representation at multi-church conferences (e.g. ICRC, NAPARC);
 - 1.2 to recommend how their findings and recommendations as per 1.1 become part of our ecclesiastical regulations;
 - 1.3 to reflect in consultation with each other how the CanRC interchurch relations committees might most effectively and efficiently work together, including but not limited to the following matters:
 - 1.3.1 the flow of information between CanRC inter-church relations committees;
 - 1.3.2 cooperation between CanRC inter-church relations committees;

² In the event the CCU and/or CRCA-SRN is/are discontinued, it/they can be removed.

- 1.3.3 the pros and cons of consolidating and reorganizing all inter-church relations committees into one, taking into consideration reflection on this in the past;
- 1.3.4 the pros and cons of maintaining different types of relationships;
- 1.4 to report on their findings as per 1.3 and to make recommendations to the churches in relation to their findings;
- 1.5 to submit their report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.