

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

In 2000 the IRC recommended to the Assembly that we only have two categories of ecclesiastical relations with other denominations. Some NAPARC denominations have three or four categories.

The PCA does not have fraternal relations with all NAPARC denominations because the Reformed Church in the United States does not want to have fraternal relations with us.

The PCA's Ecclesiastical Relations

Since the 28th General Assembly in 2000 we have had two types of ecclesiastical relationships with other denominations.

Fraternal Relations

The General Assembly may maintain a fraternal relationship with other Presbyterian/ Reformed denominations that are voting members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council and with other such Churches with whom the General Assembly wishes to establish fraternal relations unilaterally. This would involve the exchange of fraternal delegates, exchange of General Assembly or General Synod minutes, communications on matters of mutual concern, and other matters that may arise from time to time.

The PCA presently has Fraternal Relations with:

- The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
- The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
- The Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America
- Korean American Presbyterian Church
- Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)
- The United Reformed Churches in North America
- National Presbyterian Church of Mexico
- Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Corresponding Relations

The General Assembly may maintain corresponding relations with other evangelical Churches in North America and in other continents for exchanging greetings and letters of encouragement. This may include the exchange of official observers at the broadest assemblies, and communications on issues of common concern.

The PCA presently has Corresponding Relations with:

- Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC),
- Reformed Churches of South Africa,
- Presbyterian Church of Japan,
- Reformed Churches of the Netherlands,
- The Free Church of Scotland

We have had what amounts to “corresponding relations” with the Reformed Episcopal Church from early in the 1970s. The REC commended the PCA at its founding. Since the REC was one of six denominations founding the Anglican Church in North America in 2009, sometimes the ACNA ecumenical representative to our Assembly has been an REC minister or their presiding bishop and sometimes he has been from ACNA at large. The Church of England and the Reformed Church of Hungary originated as Reformed Churches, but maintained episcopal polity rather than Presbyterian polity. Part of the delegation to the Synod of Dort included an Anglican bishop, George Carleton on Llandaff, and two future bishops, Joseph Hall and John Davenant.

There are two NAPARC agreements among NAPARC member denominations that are appendices to our Book of Church Order. Both NAPARC agreements were amended and approved by our General Assembly. Neither NAPARC agreement has constitutional status, however. One of those agreements on the transfer of members does include a “fugitive from discipline” section.

In the Reformed tradition we often speak of three marks of the Church, 1) Faithful preaching to the Word, 2) administration of the sacraments, and 3) practice of discipline. Before a denomination is recommended to the Assembly for fraternal relations, the IRC investigates them to insure that they have all three marks of the Church, though the PCA does not intervene in the internal discipline of other denominations.

“Corresponding relations” could cover denominations with whom we share the universal creeds of the Church (Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed), evangelicalism in general, or the Reformed Faith in particular, and share common interests (ex. sanctity of life, biblical marriage between one man and one woman, religious liberty, etc.). For example, we have corresponding relations with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We have had Dr. Al Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, speak to our General Assembly. (Four of the five founding professors of Southern studied at the Old Princeton Seminary in the 19th Century). Theoretically, we could have corresponding relations with the Southern Baptist Convention, if the IRC recommended it and the General Assembly approved it.

Since the General Assembly in 2000, our two categories of ecclesiastical relations, have simplified matters of ecclesiastical relations and given us flexibility.

PCA Membership in Other Organizations

The PCA is a member of:

NAPARC – the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
WRF - The World Reformed Fellowship

NAPARC Denominations

NAPARC, or North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, was formed shortly after the formation of the PCA. Its purpose is four-fold:

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems that divide them as well as on those that 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.

NAPARC meets annually in the fall and is attended by PCA representatives from the Interchurch Relations Committee. Contact information is provided below for matters concerning individual churches in NAPARC denominations wishing to affiliate with the PCA. For further assistance, visit NAPARC’s website, www.naparc.org.

NAPARC Member Denominations

ARPC – Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church- www.arpchurch.org

CanRC – Canadian and American Reformed Churches - www.canrc.org

ERQ – Eglise Reformee du Quebec (aka – The Reformed Church of Quebec (RCQ)) - www.erq.qc.ca

FRCNA – Free Reformed Churches of North America - www.frcna.org

HRC – Heritage Reformed Congregations - heritagereformed.com

KAPC – Korean-American Presbyterian Church - www.kapc.org

KPCA – Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)

OPC – Orthodox Presbyterian Church – www.opc.org

PCA – Presbyterian Church in America – www.pcanet.org

PresRC – Presbyterian Reformed Church – presbyterianreformed.org

RCUS – Reformed Church in the US – www.rcus.org

RPCNA – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America - reformedpresbyterian.org

URCNA – United Reformed Churches in North America - www.urncna.org