

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

also call upon these same people to join together in their own communities to win the battle against pornography and obscenity through education, appropriate law enforcement efforts and by helping those who have been harmed.

### **E. World Fellowship of Reformed Churches**

The World Fellowship of Reformed Churches was formed by the PCA, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico in 1994. In 1995 WFRC formed the regional *Confraternidad Latinoamericana de Iglesias Reformadas (CLIR)* as a means of bringing evangelical Presbyterian and Reformed churches into contact with each other. WFRC has two goals: (1) To build a world wide fellowship among evangelical Presbyterian and Reformed denominations which enables churches to work together, mutually supporting missions, evangelism, church planting and pastor training; and (2) to establish a network where congregations, ministries, organizations and Christian individuals with ministry resources may empower those who possess vision but few resources.

In 1998 WFRC placed on the field in Costa Rica an executive director, Rev. William Green, a minister in the United Reformed Church and church planting missionary. WFRC is sponsoring several pastor training seminars in Latin America, three in Chiapas and surrounding territories in southern Mexico, where Presbyterians are experiencing a great awakening but also much persecution. WFRC also has received its first member churches outside the Americas, from India and Kenya. WFRC works closely with MTW and PCA missionaries.

### **F. Report on Categories of Ecclesiastical Relationships with Other Churches**

The object of the Presbyterian Church in America's interchurch relations has been acknowledged by previous General Assemblies as one aspect of fulfilling the Lord's prayer for the visible unity of His church (John 17:21) and to facilitate the completion of the Great Commission by working together with other like-minded evangelical and Reformed church bodies. (See *MIGA*, 1973, 1-58, pp. 39, 40; *M2GA*, 1974, p. 75, 2-100, II, A, 1)

The PCA was born twenty-five years ago with a clear vision, to be the continuing Presbyterian church in the United States. To that end, the PCA raised a clear witness to the Reformed faith and invited others to join us. God has wonderfully blessed that witness with growth in numbers and influence in this country and across the world.

The vision to strengthen and expand the impact of the Reformed faith led to the PCA's role in the formation of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) in 1978 and the Joining and Receiving with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod in 1982.

At the milestone of its 25th anniversary, the PCA reaffirms its original vision for interchurch relations, and seeks to establish appropriate relationships with other

## APPENDICES

evangelical and Reformed denominations in this country and around the world which will advance the Great Commission. Our task is to encourage those who believe the historic and Biblical faith, to offer light to those who require clearer understanding of Biblical truth, to confirm those who claim the Reformed faith in a stronger understanding and commitment to the doctrines of grace, and to lead those who share our passion for the glory of God in a growing unity of mission--that the world should bow before Christ her King.

The 25th General Assembly noted the need to clarify and update the PCA's categories of ecclesiastical fellowship. To this end the Interchurch Relations Committee has sought to make as little change as possible so that we reflect the continuity of policies which have served us well through the years. (See *M2GA*, 1974, p. 76, 2-100, II, A, Z; *M12GA*, 1984, p. 96, 12-29, III, 10; *M19GA*, 1991, p. 65, 19-19, III, 2) Categories of Ecclesiastical Relationships are as follows:

### 1. FRATERNAL RELATIONS

The General Assembly may choose certain Reformed denominations in North America with whom to enjoy Fraternal Relations. Essential agreement of doctrine, government and practice is the only basis upon which Fraternal Relations may be established. Fraternal Relations may be implemented where practical and desirable by any or all of the following expressions of respect, fellowship and endorsement:

- a. Exchange of Fraternal Delegates at major assemblies. (The PCA can receive as fraternal delegates, men who subscribe to the classic Reformed confessions, and whose office in their communion is on a parity with the offices of Ruling and Teaching Elder in the PCA);
- b. Occasional pulpit fellowship;
- c. Intercommunion (i.e., fellowship at the Table of the Lord);
- d. Joint action in areas of common responsibility;
- e. Communication on major issues of joint concern;
- f. Exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view of promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.
- g. Exchange of Minutes/Acts of the broadest assemblies.

### 2. ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

The PCA may maintain Ecclesiastical Fellowship through the Interchurch Relations Committee, with Reformed denominations in North America where the PCA shares membership in a larger organized fellowship (e.g., NAPARC, NAE, or others entered by action of the General Assembly). Although there may not be essential agreement of doctrine, government or practice, Ecclesiastical Fellowship recognizes certain common interests, the desire to "get to know" the other denomination, or benefit to the PCA through

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correspondence or cooperation. Ecclesiastical Fellowship may be implemented by any or all of the following expressions of respect and fellowship:

- a. Sending and/or receiving men as Ecclesiastical Fellows at major assemblies where approved by both bodies;
- b. Joint action in areas of common responsibility;
- c. Communication on major issues of mutual concern;
- d. Exchanges of correspondence;
- e. Exchange of Minutes/Acts of the broadest assemblies.

### 3. CORRESPONDING RELATIONS

The PCA may maintain Corresponding Relations through the Interchurch Relations Committee with other evangelical churches in North America for the purpose of 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.

### 4. INTERNATIONAL FRATERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

The PCA will maintain International Fraternal Correspondence through the Interchurch Relations Committee with Reformed churches across the world with whom the PCA has established a cooperative agreement, or who are members of an international organization the General Assembly has chosen to enter, such as the World Fellowship of Reformed Churches. International Fraternal Correspondence is not an endorsement of another church's doctrine or practice. Rather, it is a means for experiencing fellowship and getting to know other churches with the aim of developing mutually beneficial cooperation. International Fraternal Correspondence may be implemented by any or all of the following expressions of cooperation:

- a. Sending and/or receiving men as Fraternal Representatives at major assemblies as time, geography and finances permit;
- b. Exchanges of correspondence;
- c. Fellowship meetings in conjunction with WFRC;
- d. Sending and/or receiving men as representatives at church courts, if agreeable to those courts;
- e. Establishment of cooperative agreements as approved by the General Assembly.

### **G. United Reformed Church**

The IRC sent TEs Donald MacNair and Thomas Vanden Heuvel as observers to the second Synod of the United Reformed Churches of North America (URC) held in Ontario, Canada, October 21-24, 1997. The URC is a young denomination made up primarily of churches which have left the Christian Reformed Church. They have perhaps 65-70 congregations and possibly 13,000-15,000 members. The URC exhibits opposition to a unified church government in its early organization. The synod meeting