

The United Reformed Churches in North America
Synod Wheaton 2018
Press Release #4
Thursday, June 14, 2018

Initial Work

Thursday morning at 8 A.M., Synod reconvened jointly with the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). Dr. Douglas Felch read and exhorted from Luke 22 and John 21, led the joint assemblies in prayer, and called for the singing of *Father, I Know That All My Life*.

Synod spent the entire day in general session, having completed almost all advisory committee work yesterday.

Ecumenical Relationships

Throughout the day, fraternal greetings were brought by men representing various communions, including Rev. Will Hesterberg of the Presbyterian Church in America; Mr. Ed Laman of the Free Reformed Churches of North America; Rev. Peter Szabo of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe; and Rev. Tim Philips of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Missions

Synod approved adding members to the federation Missions Committee and mandated the Missions Committee to investigate the current OPC model and the older CRC model (including financing) for their missionary endeavors, to see if they are feasible for the URC to use for our missionary endeavors, and if so to make specific recommendations for how we can do this. The specific individuals to be appointed to the committee are yet to be determined.

Synod re-appointed Rev. Richard Bout as the Missions Coordinator. Rev. Bout addressed the assembly and was heartily thanked for his work as the Missions Coordinator.

After much deliberation, the Synod voted not to create two Missions Coordinator positions – foreign and domestic – choosing to retain one position of Missions Coordinator.

Website, Statistician, and Appeal

The reports from the Website Oversight Committee and from the Consistory overseeing the committee were received and discussed. Grace URC in Waupun, Wisconsin was reappointed as the overseeing Consistory.

Synod decided to create a new functionary of the federation, namely, a Statistician, who would focus on collecting, compiling, and publishing information related to the annual directory. The Statistician will take over these duties from the Webmaster and the Stated Clerk. Synod appointed Mrs. Jody Luth to serve as Statistician.

Synod considered an appeal by an individual concerning a practice of his Consistory. Synod addressed each ground of the appeal and adjudicated the appeal.

Membership Departure

The previous Synod, Wyoming 2016, adopted pastoral advice concerning how to deal with members who depart from a congregation and encouraged the churches to submit overtures to amend the Church Order accordingly. Two overtures were sent to Synod Wheaton 2018 to this end, presenting two differing sets of changes.

Synod adopted the overture most closely following the pastoral advice from Synod Wyoming 2016, and consistories are given until the end of the year to ratify the changes to the Church Order.

Marriage Affirmations

“It is timely for the URCNA to reaffirm its teaching on the nature of marriage due to the great upheaval we are witnessing in the natural, moral, and legal understanding of marriage as our culture and legal structures become increasingly unmoored from God’s law and opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.” So stated the first ground supporting sixteen “Affirmations Regarding Marriage” that came before Synod.

These affirmations arose from four overtures sent to Synod, indicating the strong desire to have Synod make a clear statement concerning the institution of marriage. It did. Synod adopted without dissent the “Affirmations Regarding Marriage” as a Doctrinal Affirmation. The Lord willing, these affirmations will be published on the federation website as well as made available to those who request it from the Stated Clerk.

Hymn Sing and Foreign Missions Session

The evening session was taken up with a hymn sing led by Rev. Brian Cochran and presentations on foreign mission works, interspersed with prayer for foreign missions. Four foreign missionaries from the URCNA, the foreign missions General Secretary from the OPC, and an OPC foreign missionary provided presentations about the works in which they are involved.