



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

COMMITTEE REPORT

Fraternal Relations Committee
Report to the 39th General Assembly



Tod Paulson
Chairman

Summary of Work, 2018-2019:

1. Pursued the 38th General Assembly (2018) instruction to work to develop a fraternal relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.
2. Pursued the 38th General Assembly (2018) instruction to work to develop a fraternal relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland.
3. Addressed the matter of the composition of the Fraternal Relations Committee.
4. Received an update on the work of the Translation Project team.
5. Continued to engage the Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM) as the EPC builds on this new fraternal relationship.

Recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly:

1. **Recommendation 39-16:**
That the EPC maintain its relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) through its membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).
2. **Recommendation 39-17:**
The committee recommends that the EPC continue its conversation with leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland about the possibility of a fraternal relationship.
3. **Recommendation 39-18:**
The committee recommends that *Rules for Assembly* be amended to reduce the number of ex-officio members of the committee.

Work of the Committee in 2018-2019:

The 38th General Assembly (2018) instructed the Committee to “work to develop fraternal relations” with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI). Both denominations are members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), of which the EPC is a member.

Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). In response to the instruction of the 38th General Assembly, the committee is very grateful for the efforts of RE David Van Valkenburg (Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church, Englewood, Colorado) on its behalf. Van Valkenburg met with a number of PCG leaders on November 12, 2018 and filed an extensive report of these meetings. In addition to this report, the committee received documents from the PCG, including a proposed Memo of Understanding. Having severed ties with the PCUSA in 2011, the PCG is very interested in a fraternal relationship with the EPC. At its March 21, 2019, meeting the committee discussed at length and made a recommendation for 39th General Assembly consideration (see below).

Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI). The committee is very grateful for the efforts of TE Walter Taylor (Oak Island EPC, Oak Island, North Carolina) on behalf of the committee. As a part of his 2019 sabbatical in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Taylor met with a number of leaders of the PCI and filed an extensive report of these meetings. Like the PCG, the PCI is very interested in a fraternal relationship with the EPC. It is still in relationship with the PCUSA, but those relations were described to Walter as “frosty.” The historic ties between Irish Presbyterianism and American Presbyterianism are significant. Francis Makemie served in the PCI before being sent to the colonies in 1683. He organized the first presbytery in America. PCI leadership described itself as “the last orthodox, reformed Presbyterian denomination in western Europe.” They also “take their confessional subscription to the Westminster Standards seriously.” PCI leadership also informed Taylor that in response to the 38th Assembly’s action to “work to develop fraternal relations” with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the PCI at its General Assembly June 3-7, 2019, will consider a reciprocal action. It is with that understanding that the committee made its recommendation for 39th General Assembly consideration (see below).

Composition of the Committee. At its October 3, 2018, meeting the committee reviewed the *Rules for Assembly* and *Acts of Assembly* declarations about the composition and work of the committee. It was noted that according to *Rules*, there should be four ex-officio members of the committee: The Stated Clerk, Moderator, Moderator-elect and past Moderator. Recent practice has been for the Stated Clerk and Moderator to participate regularly in the work of the committee. The sense of the committee was that two ex-officio members is sufficient, and made a recommendation for the 39th General Assembly to consider (see below).



List of Fraternal Relations and Ecumenical Memberships. The EPC currently enjoys the following fraternal relationships and ecumenical partnerships:

Fraternal Relationships

1. United States
 - a. Christian Reformed Church (CRC)
 - b. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP)

NOTE: We enjoy informal relations with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). We host “guests” of the other at our General Assemblies.

2. Global
 - a. Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB)
 - b. St. Andrews Presbytery, Argentina
 - c. Evangelical & Reformed Church of Kazakhstan (ERCK)
 - d. Evangelical & Reformed Church of Peru (ERCP)
 - e. National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM)

Ecumenical Organization Memberships

1. National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)
2. World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)
3. World Reformed Fellowship (WRF)

World Reformed Fellowship (WRF). The 2019 General Assembly of the WRF will take place August 8-12, 2019 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Representing the EPC at this gathering (which takes place every four years) will be 39th General Assembly Moderator Case Thorp and Assistant Stated Clerk Jerry Iamurri.

National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM). The committee is very pleased to learn that there are three INPM-ordained ministers leading EPC church plants in Hispanic neighborhoods. These are located in Omaha, Nebraska; Huntersville, North Carolina; and Memphis, Tennessee. Each of these works is moving ahead slowly but well. Lighthouse EPC (Presbytery of the Great Plains) has agreed to partner with an INPM church in the Cozumel region of Mexico to help with short-term mission and outreach work in Mexico. The hope is that a successful church-to-church relationship will lead to a successful presbytery-to-presbytery relationship as the EPC builds a strong relationship with the INPM.

Translation Project. The committee is very grateful for the team that is working to translate EPC documents into Spanish. This team includes RE Alfredo Aponte-Cordova, TE Thomas Johnson, TE Juan Rivera, and RE Jorge Martinez. Please see the statement of

their work below to celebrate the extensive and outstanding work they've completed to date.

Recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly:

Recommendation 39-16

The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends to the 39th General Assembly (2019) that the EPC maintain its relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana through its membership in the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

Recommendation 39-17

The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends to the 39th General Assembly (2019) that the EPC continue its conversation with leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland as it explores the possibility of a fraternal relationship.

Recommendation 39-18

The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends to the 39th General Assembly (2019) that *Rules for Assembly* be amended to reduce the number of *ex officio* members on the committee from four (immediate past Moderator, Moderator, Moderator-elect, and Stated Clerk) to two (Moderator and Stated Clerk).

Current <i>Rules for Assembly</i>	Proposed <i>Rules for Assembly</i>
I.1 Membership to consist of six members plus the immediate past Moderator, the Moderator, the Moderator-elect and the Stated Clerk as members ex officio.	I.1 Membership to consist of six members plus the immediate past Moderator, the Moderator, the Moderator-elect and the Stated Clerk as members ex officio.



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COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members:

RE Tod Paulson (Chairman), Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

RE Gwynn Blair, Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

RE Carol Culbertson, Presbytery of the West

TE Don Fortson, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic

RE Jerry Harmon, Presbytery of the Central South

RE Tom Werner (Moderator), Presbytery of Mid-America (ex officio)

TE Jeffrey Jeremiah (Stated Clerk), Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest (ex officio)

TE Dean Weaver (NLT Chairman, Past Moderator), Presbytery of the Alleghenies (ex officio)

TE Case Thorp (Moderator-elect), Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean (ex officio)

Committee Meeting Dates:

October 3, 2018

March 21, 2019

April 23, 2019

May 3, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Tod Paulson
Chairman

June 2019

Evangelical Presbyterian Church / Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana
Hispanic Ministries Documentation / Documentación para Ministerios Hispánicos

as of 11/19/18

Document Name		Stage								Comments
English	Spanish	Source	Translation	Digitalized	Revision	Translation Completed	Edited	Published		
WEB SITE DOCUMENTS - Who We Are										
Welcome - From the Stated Clerk	Bienvenidos - Del Secretario General	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
About the EPC	Sobre la EPC	Web site	x	x						
Distinctives	Distintivos	Web site	x	x						
Values	Valores	Web site	x	x						
Beliefs	Creencias	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
History	Historia	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
FAQ	Preguntas Frecuentes	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
Fraternal Relationships	Relaciones Fraternalas	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
GA Moderators	Moderadores de la Asamblea General	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
WEB SITE DOCUMENTS - Position Papers										
			Translation	Digitalized	Revision	Translation Completed	Edited	Published	Comments	
Abortion	El Aborto	Web site	x	x	x	x				11/19/18 - Re-revised and ready 8/6/18 - Revised
Divorce and Remarriage	El Divorcio y el Nuevo Casamiento	Web site	x	x	x	x				11/19/18 - Revised and ready (Alfredo Aponte)
The Holy Spirit	El Espíritu Santo	Web site	x	x	x	x				11/19/18 - Revised and ready 8/12/16 - Revision initiated
Human Sexuality	La Sexualidad Humana	Web site	x	IP						11/19/18 - Digitalization in progress (Zulma Irizarry) 9/17/18 - Translation done. Digitalization next 7/3/18 - Delivered to Jorge Martinez for translation
Ordination of Women	La Ordenación de Mujeres	Web site	x	x	x	x				11/19/18 - Revised and ready (Alfredo Aponte)
Problem of Suffering, Death, and Dying	El Problema del Sufrimiento, la Muerte y el Morir	Web site	x	x	IP					11/19/18 - Ready for revision
The Value and Respect for Human Life	El Valor y el Respeto por la Vida Humana	Web site	x	x	x	x				11/19/18 - Revised and ready (Alfredo Aponte)
WEB SITE DOCUMENTS - Pastoral Letters										
			Translation	Digitalized	Revision	Translation Completed	Edited	Published	Comments	
AIDS / HIV	SIDA / VIH	Web site	x	IP						11/19/18 - Digitalization en progreso (Zulma Irizarry) 9/18/18 - Document delivered to Anc. Jorge Martinez
Children and the Lord's Supper	Los Niños y la Santa Cena del Señor	Web site	x	IP						11/19/18 - Digitalization in progress (Zulma Irizarry) 9/18/18 - Document delivered to Anc. Jorge Martinez
Civil Disobedience	La Desobediencia Civil	Web site	IP							11/20/18 - Document delivered to Jorge Martinez for translation
Criteria for Evaluating Membership in Secret Fraternal Organizations	Criterios para Evaluar Membresias en Organizaciones Fraternalas Secretas	Web site								11/19/18 - Not started. Document requested to EPC via Web Site.
Domestic Abuse	El Abuso Doméstico	Web site	IP							11/20/18 - Document delivered to Jorge Martinez for translation
Open Theism	El Ateísmo Abierto	Web site	IP							11/20/18 - Document delivered to Jorge Martinez for translation
Organ Donation and Transplantation	Donación y Transplante de Órganos	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
The Use of Catechisms in the EPC	El Uso de Catecismos en la EPC	Web site								11/19/18 - not started
WEB SITE Documents - Confession, Catechism and Essentials of Our Faith										
			Translation	Digitalized	Revision	Translation Completed	Edited	Published	Comments	
Essentials of Our Faith	Principios Esenciales de Nuestra Fe	Web site	x	x	IP					11/19/18 - Need to revise and harmonize 2 versions -Jorge Martinez (Stand Alone Document) and Tom Johnson (Book of Order)
Westminster Confession of Faith	Confesión de Fe de Westminster	Web site								11/19/18 - Need to define base spanish version to use (Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de Méjico?). Additional US chapters need full translation.
Westminster Larger Catechism	Catecismo Mayor de Westminster	Web site								11/19/18 - Need to define base spanish version to use (Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de Méjico?)
Westminster Shorter Catechism	Catecismo Menor de Westminster	Web site								11/19/18 - Need to define base spanish version to use (Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de Méjico?)
WEB SITE DOCUMENTS - Resources										
			Translation	Digitalized	Revision	Translation Completed	Edited	Published	Comments	
The Book of Order	Libro de Orden	Web site	x	x	IP					11/19/18 - 1st draft completed by Tom Johnson
Leadership Training Guide	Manual de Adiestramiento para Líderes	Web site								11/19/18 - Version I use by Iglesia Presbiteriana Westminster needs revision to formalize as an EPC formal document to be shared
Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees	Manual de Procedimiento para Comités Ministeriales y de Candidatos al Santo Ministerio	Web site	x	x	IP					11/19/18 - not started
Written Ordination Exam Study Guide	Guía de Estudio para el Examen Escrito de Ordenación	Web site								11/19/18 - not started