
FRATERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

37th General Assembly

Members of the Fraternal Relations Committee (FRC) are RE Gwynn Blair (Florida), RE Peter Pugliese (Alleghenies), TE Gerrit Dawson-Chair (Gulf South), TE Gary McGhee (Mid-Atlantic), RE Jerry Harmon (Central South) and RE Tod Paulson (Rivers and Lakes). The FRC met October 25, 2016 and March 8, 2017 via telephone conference call. Throughout the year Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah was in regular contact with FRC chair Gerrit Dawson about fraternal relations issues.



*Gerrit Dawson
Chairman*

The Work of the Committee

Mexico – At our 36th General Assembly (2016) we entered into a fraternal relationship with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM). The primary focus of this partnership will be church planting in Hispanic communities in the US and church planting in northern Mexico. Moderator Mike Moses, Stated Clerk Jeff Jeremiah, Executive Associate Bill Enns and Home Missionary John Bueno attended the September 7-9, 2016 General Assembly meeting of the INPM to conclude the agreement.

Following immigration procedures in a timely fashion is a potential challenge we will face in bringing INPM pastors to the US to help us plant churches in Hispanic communities. Lake Forest-Huntersville, NC is leading the way in researching this issue. Lake Forest has learned that for incoming ministers and (lay) religious workers, the fastest way to gain entry is through use of the R-1 temporary non-immigrant religious worker status. The term “temporary” in this status means “an undetermined length of time.” A person with an R-1 in the US can then begin the process of being in the country on a permanent basis (“Green Card”). This process can take a long time, because R-1 status is low on the priority list. It is an employment-based, not family-based status.

Peru – Ken Priddy, Bill Enns and Jeff Jeremiah attended the January 25-26 General Assembly meeting of the Evangelical and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Peru. On March 8, the Fraternal Relations Committee recommended to the 37th General Assembly (2017) that the EPC enter into a fraternal relationship with the Evangelical and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Peru for the purpose of developing equipping materials (theological and practical) and church revitalization materials for leaders in the Peruvian Church.

Ethiopia – Two EPC churches in the Presbytery of the Pacific have worked for years with the Evangelical Ethiopian Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). In response to an inquiry by those churches and WO Associate Dave Fenska, the Fraternal Relations Committee encouraged Pacific leadership to pursue this relationship. Should Pacific ask for EPC fraternal relationship similar to the request of First-Orlando with Fianganon’i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikar a (FJKM) in Madagascar, the Committee will be interested in receiving this request.

France – The EPC received an invitation to attend the May 12-14 Synod meeting of the National Union of the Protestant Evangelical Reformed Churches of France. The meeting will take place at Montauban. Working with EPC World Outreach, the Fraternal Relations Committee will cover the expenses for EPC WO global worker Jeff Kim to represent the EPC at this meeting. Jeff, who is located in Europe will evaluate the possibility of a relationship with this group.

Ghana – in May we received correspondence from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana asking for a fraternal relationship with the EPC. The Committee will address this request in the fall.

Caribbean - Moderator-elect Dean Weaver and Executive Associate Bill Enns traveled to Puerto Rico and St. Vincent, Grenadines February 21-27. In Puerto Rico, together with Pastor Juan Rivera of the Westminster Church in Bayamon, they met with Pastor Ramon Sosa, a Baptist pastor from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic who corresponded with Bill Enns throughout the fall. Pastor Sosa had read the Westminster Confession and had become convinced that he was Reformed in his understanding and is now seeking to join the EPC together with his congregation. In early April, Pastor Juan Rivera flew to the D.R. to meet with Pastor Sosa and leadership to begin the process of training leadership and preparing Pastor Sosa for ordination exams. In St. Vincent Weaver and Enns met with Dr. Walford Thompson who gathered leaders from 18 churches on the island to hear about the EPC. At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Thompson told those gathered that his congregation was joining the EPC and he encouraged them to join as well. Should this possibility develop, it will likely become a Florida Presbytery matter, not a Fraternal Relations one. However, we report this as further evidence of the Lord continuing to bring to us opportunities as we commit to be a global movement of churches.

Recommendations to the General Assembly

Recommendation FR-1

That the EPC enter into a fraternal relationship with the Evangelical and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Peru for the purpose of developing equipping materials (theological and practical) and church revitalization materials for leaders in the Peruvian Church.

Respectfully submitted,


Gerrit Dawson
Chairman

June 2017