

# APG-AAPM-SEAPI: MOVING FORWARD

The purpose of this working paper is to appreciate and learn from what God did among us in the past, as well as understand now what God wants us to do in the coming years. Since God has worked through us as a community of Southeast Asians and Pacific Islands churches and leaders, let us continue the process of discerning and being faithful together to what God's plans are next for us. As we do these together, may our efforts indeed bring glory, praise, and honor to Him!

*(NOTE: This is a draft working paper prepared prior to the convening of SEAPI's annual retreat, August 6-9, 2018 in Tennessee, IL. As a working paper, information contained herein will be reviewed, updated, and corrected with some events and names that may not have been fully reported.)*

## **A. HISTORY**

### **1999-2003: All Asians Planning Group, or APG (initiated by CRC Home Missions)**

From the All Asians Planning Group (APG), concept paper written by Rev. Tong K. Park, April 2003

**Vision:** APG gives effective leadership to the Asian churches within CRCNA so that they may become self-sustaining (financially), self-governing (structurally), self-propagating (growing, discipling, multiplying), and self-expressing (contextualizing) as Christian Reformed congregations.

**Core Values:** evangelism, family, education, community, friendship, partnership, mission (to homeland)

**Mission Statement:** APG exists to provide leadership to the 120+ Asian churches in the CRCNA [Korean CRCs included] regarding evangelism, training needs, financial sustainability, and coping with generational and acculturation issues through consultations, mentoring, and networking with CRC's institutions and agencies, as well as outside sources such as Boot Program and other training resources.

Around the middle of 2003, as a result of program changes in the CRHM, APG members were encouraged to apply to the then new Sustaining Pastoral Excellence/Lilly Endowment program.

### **2004-2006: Asian-American Pastoral Ministry (AAPM), peer learning group under the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE)/Lilly Endowment Program**

In December 2003, the group applied and was awarded a peer learning group grant under the CRC-Lilly Endowment Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program. The group of ten (10) Asian pastors adopted a new name, the Asian-American Pastoral Ministry, or AAPM. From that time on, AAPM became a self-directed collaborative peer learning and ministry planning group. Rev. Tong K. Park (Home Missions) and Rev. Mike Vander Pol (World Missions) continued as advisors. From 2004 to 2006, we applied each year and were awarded grants helping us function as a growing peer learning group through face-to-face retreats that later included spouses.

#### **List of SEAPI retreats from 2004-2006:**

Retreat 1: July 5-7, 2004 in Aurora, CO

Retreat 2: March 7-10, 2005 in Lake Tahoe, NV

Retreat 3: Aug 2-4, 2005 in Stony Point, NY

Retreat 4: Feb 27-Mar 2, 2006 in Hayward, CA

Retreat 5: Sep 18-21, 2006 in Lake Geneva, WI

*(list continued from 2007-2016 on next page)*

## **2005: Proposal for an Asian Ministry Program**

In October 2005, AAPM formally submitted a proposal to establish an Asian Ministry Program. The idea was like the Korean and Latin American ministry programs run by Home Missions. A small group of AAPM leaders (Nam Kieu, Socheth Na, and Fernando; thee may have been others?) met and discussed with then Executive Director Gerry Dykstra, Peter Borgdorff, and Esteban Lugo. Nothing happened after that submission. Looking back, perhaps the idea for a separate CRC Asian Ministry Program was way ahead of its time, too ambitious, or did not gain support nor interest due to the denominational funding pressures brought about by the developing economic recession.

## **2007-2018: AAPM grows & becomes SEAPI, Southeast Asian & Pacific Island CRCs**

On June 5-7, 2007, We convened what we called the first Leadership Summit among Southeast Asian and Pacific Island CRCs at Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, MI. There were 55 church pastors, women, and youth leaders from 26 churches out of 41 we surveyed as Southeast Asian and Pacific Island CRCs. It was a blessed gathering to remember as we fellowshiped and agreed to step up together as a united group of CRCs. Our meeting was made even more memorable because we were able to attend CRC's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary worship at the Van Andel Arena.

### **List of SEAPI retreats from 2007-2016:** *(marked "?" means incomplete information)*

Retreat 6: June 5-7, 2007 in Grand Rapids, MI (Summit I)

Retreat 7: June 3-5, 2008 in Long Scraggy Ranch, CO

Retreat 8: Oct 29-Nov 1, 2008 in Winfield, IL

? Retreat \_: June 8-11, 2009 in \_\_\_\_\_, IL (Summit II?)

? Retreat \_: Aug 27-29, 2009 in \_\_\_\_, MI (?)

? Women of SEAPI: Nov 13, 2009 in Holland, MI (?)

? Retreat \_: Aug 17, 2010 in Hiawatha Retreat Center, MI

? SEAPI-CLAY Retreat \_: Aug 11-14, 2015 in Indiana (?)

? Retreat \_: Sep 14, 2016 in Salt Lake City, UT

## **2018 and beyond:**

Would you agree? We, as pastors and leaders of SEAPI, have a continuing desire to:

- a) appreciate and learn from the past;
- b) renew and strengthen our fellowship to include new/emerging Asian churches;
- c) review and assess our current and changing needs/situations among our churches;
- d) redefine our mission and purpose as SEAPI moving forward

To accomplish these, we must develop improved ways of partnering and helping each other, at the same time partner with new denominational programs and other resources.

SEAPI-CLAY Retreat: Aug 6-9, 2018 in Tennessee, IL

(still being planned) Youth Leadership Conference, Southern CA: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Here are a few observations that suggest our mission and purposes have changed from APG to AAPM to becoming SEAPI. On the right column, what must we do to meet our churches' current and changing needs/situations for the next 5-10 years?**

<b>Observations &amp; Changes</b>	<b>What did we do? / What must we do?</b>
1. Home Missions initiated programs and developed learning events for us.	We attended conferences/seminars to learn how to do ministry within CRC doctrines and guidelines.
2. Almost if not all of us are first-generation pastors and leaders.	Most if not all of us lead worship in our native language.
3. Some of our church activities are influenced by our native culture and values.	
4. Much of our thinking, values, and social behaviors are influenced by our first-generation upbringing and struggles.	
5. Our people had been adopting North American values and attitudes.	
6. Our young people are gradually adopting and changing from our traditional values.	
7. Some of our young people want to worship and praise in ways that are different from our first-generational practices.	
8. Because of the pressures from first-generation to contemporary church ways, some of our young people are going away.	
9. Because most of our church members are struggling to establish a better life, it is difficult to adequately financially support our church ministry with low giving.	
9. Some of us (pastors) began to see we could together improve our abilities to manage and plan our group's development and growth.	APG changed to AAPM and later to SEAPI. What will SEAPI become next??
10. We began to become familiar and knowledgeable about our denominational	

polity, doctrines, and ministry programs and resources.	
11. Some of our pastors had reached retirement age and others are a few years away. How are we preparing pastoral and leadership succession?	
12. How can we train our young people so they are ready and willing to take up leadership in our churches?	
13. Instead of being influenced by our homeland's ritualistic and traditional religious practices, how can we disciple our people, young and old, to follow Christ wholeheartedly and Biblically?	
14. Serving as pastors to our congregations is our primary responsibility while becoming involved in SEAPI secondary. How can I wisely balance these two?	
15. In order for SEAPI to be successful and effective in helping our churches, member pastors and other leaders need to step up and help. How exactly must we do this?	

# ASIAN-AMERICAN PASTORAL MINISTRY (AAPM)

*"connecting, strengthening, engaging, and sustaining healthy Asian churches in the CRC"*

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## MEMBERSHIP COVENANT (2006)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, covenant with my brothers and sisters in AAPM:

To practice –

1. Spiritual formation and pastoral excellence personally and corporately with my peer learning group and local church leaders.
2. Accountability and mutual encouragement in accomplishing AAPM's mission, goals, and tasks such as spiritual disciplines, book reflections, short papers and presentations on leadership and ministry practices, and group emails.

To participate –

3. In semi-annual face-to-face meetings with my spouse as much as possible.
4. In bi-monthly conference calls (for all group members) and monthly calls (for leadership team members).
5. In communicating my ideas and suggestions to the group coordinator and members about ways of improving and furthering the mission of AAPM.

To promote –

6. The goals, mission, and activities of AAPM to my spouse, family, local church, and Classis.
7. Prayer and financial support for AAPM among the leaders of my local church and Classis, other CRCs, and denominational agencies.

May our Triune God be glorified and His Kingdom strengthened through the mission and goals of AAPM. With God's help and a prayer of thanksgiving and submission to His sovereign will, I sign this covenant today.

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by two local church leaders:

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_ Print: \_\_\_\_\_