

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

of the

Communion of Reformed
Evangelical Churches



COMMUNION OF REFORMED
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

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CONSTITUTION *and* BYLAWS



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Constitution and Bylaws of The Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

[Revised November 2017]



COMMUNION OF REFORMED
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

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Preamble

The name of this confederation of churches is the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches [CREC]. We use the word Communion in its common sense of being participants in one particular body gathered within the broader body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. By Reformed, we testify that we stand in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy and call to mind the importance of continual reformation and sanctification for the Church of Jesus Christ in light of Holy Scripture, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. By Evangelical, we confess that the Gospel of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, and the Church's calling is to proclaim it with love and doctrinal integrity. The nature of our affiliation is one of confederation, that is, we have formed a broad connection between churches which, with respect to polity, is representative, being neither hierarchical nor autonomous. Our gathering of churches is not intended as a separation from other orthodox believers who confess the name of Christ, but rather as a gathering within that broader church, in order to work together effectively for reformation.

With patterns of church order and confessional standards, one of the fundamental requirements of Scripture is honesty (Ex. 20:16). Consequently, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we charge you, the generations who will follow us in this confederation, to submit to the Scriptures with sincere and honest hearts, and to the standards of this confederation as consistent with the teaching of Scripture. When a portion of our order and confession is found to be out of conformity to Scripture, we charge you to amend it honestly, openly, and constitutionally, as men who must

give an account to the God who searches the hearts of men. We charge you in the name of the Lord to abhor all forms of ignoring our intentions in what we have set down through dissembling, reinterpretation, dishonesty, relativism, pretended explanations, presumed spiritual maturity, assumed scholarly sophistication, compromise with any forms of sexual and gender-related activism, or outright lying, so that the living God will not strike you and your children with a curse. We charge you to serve Him in all diligence and honesty, so that the blessings of the covenant may extend to your children for a thousand generations.

Our desire is to acknowledge, preserve and manifest unity, preserve purity, and advance Christ's kingdom in an orderly and reasonable way, resulting in mutual edification, accountability, and spiritual discipline. Membership in this confederation is in no way meant to exclude warm relations with other faithful Christian bodies. We therefore welcome and encourage any relations with likeminded churches, presbyteries and denominations that are consistent with this Constitution.

Article I. Authority of Scripture

- A. The Scriptures are always the ultimate and inerrant court of appeal (Ps. 18:30; 119:89; Matt. 4:4; John 16:12–15; Rom. 3:1–2; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Because this is a constitutional document, a certain emphasis must be placed on creeds and confessions in what follows (Acts 15:1–31; 16:4–5; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17–18; John 1:14; 1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 7). However, in no way is it our intention to set such confessions of faith above or alongside the Scriptures. Our expectation is that all our churches

will routinely teach and preach the whole counsel of God as expressed in Scripture (Acts 20:27; Matt. 4:4), and in all matters of doctrinal discussion and debate, an appeal to Scripture will always be the first resort. In accordance with our creedal and confessional standards, we acknowledge the pre-eminence of Scripture.

- B. Our intention is to submit to all those principles regarding church order, which are clearly required by Scripture, or required by deductions from Scripture, which can be understood through good and necessary consequence. For the rest, we desire to operate in terms of a sanctified Christian prudence, with all things done in good order and biblical decency. We make no claim that every detail of our confederated order is found in Scripture. At all times, we seek to reflect the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ps. 133; Eph. 4:3, 13).

Article II. The Offices

- A. The CREC takes no constitutional position on the validity of 2-, 3- or 4-office view of church polity. These documents use the word *pastor* to refer to the man who has primary responsibility for leading worship on the Lord's Day.
- B. Within the CREC each elder must be a member of the church, which he serves. This requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis by a unanimous vote of the presbytery.
- C. Each congregation must be committed in principle and practice to government by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Jas. 5:14). Congregations without a plurality of elders must have accountability with another established CREC church.

- D. Each congregation will be served as possible by a plurality of deacons (Acts 6:5–7; 1 Tim. 3:8–13).
- E. The CREC affirms the need for spiritually-disciplined, well-educated pastors, qualified in their households, grounded in rigorous and wise handling of the Scriptures, and exhibiting a thorough understanding of the biblical world and life view (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9).
- F. Any candidate for pastor, regardless of his level of formal education, will be examined before ordination (See Article IV.A.2.g). The candidate will be examined by a local session of elders with regard to his manner of life, knowledge of Scripture, and doctrinal understanding. The presbytery will also examine him with regard to his manner of life, knowledge of Scripture, and doctrinal understanding. The presbytery may or may not recommend his ordination to the session of the local congregation. The local session is not judicially bound by the recommendation of presbytery. If a local session does not abide by the presbytery recommendation, then the presbytery may or may not initiate proceedings according to Article IV.D.5.
- G. If a pastor has already been ordained within the CREC, he may not be required by presbytery or council to undergo another presbyterial examination. Such an examination may occur if both the calling church and the candidate agree to it. If a man has been ordained outside the CREC, the local congregation may seek the wisdom of the presbytery in the examination of his ministerial credentials, or the presbytery may also request the examination of the candidate.
- H. If a church holding the 4-office view would like the ordination of a teacher to be recognized on a broader scale within

the CREC, comparable to the way the ordination of a pastor currently is, such a church may request a modified examination of that man by presbytery.

- I. Any institutions and processes of ministerial education and training that are formally associated with the CREC must be under the authority and supervision of a local session of elders in a local CREC church (2 Tim. 2:1–2).

Article III. Local Congregations

- A. We hold the local congregation has primacy in the structure of biblical church government (Heb. 13:7, 17) without denying the important blessings and obligations which come from broader connections and fellowship.
- B. Each church will adopt into its statement of faith the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon in the form found in Article X of this Constitution (1 Tim. 6:12). A CREC local church may use forms of the creeds that differ from the forms found in the CREC Constitution, provided that the alternative forms 1) differ only in being an alternative translation; and 2) the adopted form is approved at the Presbytery level at the stated meeting immediately following the decision by the local church to adopt an alternative form. Forms of the creeds which have been modernized for spelling and usage are acceptable. Forms which have been altered with regard to doctrinal content are not.
- C. Each church will adopt into its statement of faith at least one of the following:
 1. Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)
 2. American Westminster Confession of Faith (1788)

3. Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of the Synod at Dordt)
4. Belgic Confession (1561)
5. Heidelberg Catechism
6. London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
7. Savoy Declaration (1658)
8. Reformed Evangelical Confession (see Article XI)
9. Second Helvetic Confession
10. 39 Articles of Christian Religion

D. Criteria for membership

1. Before a congregation can be accepted into CREC membership it must:
 - a) have its own constitution;
 - b) have been in existence for at least two years;
 - c) have at least two elders; and
 - d) have enough support from members to meet all regular expenses necessary to sustain the life of that congregation.
2. Congregations seeking membership with the CREC which do not meet the criteria set forth in subsection 1 of this section must come under the care of an existing CREC church and will be characterized as mission churches. Mission churches may have non-voting delegations at presbytery and church council meetings.
3. Membership of Mission Churches
 - a) When a mission church comes to meet the criteria for a particularized church, it may be accepted into

voting membership of the CREC by a two-thirds vote of presbytery.

- b) Any mission church sponsored in another geographical territory must receive the approval of the presbytery in which it resides.
- c) Any mission church accepted into the CREC membership must be particularized in the presbytery in which it resides.

E. Form of Subscription

1. Elders of CREC member churches must declare their honest subscription to the doctrine in the confessions adopted by their church (excluding declared amendments or exceptions). Subscription to the confessions does not mean that the confessions necessarily formulate the doctrine in the best manner, or that they are exhaustive statements of the doctrines confessed, or that they address every teaching of Scripture or condemn every error. Furthermore, subscription does not mean that churches are bound to the Scripture references and allusions, incidental remarks or the theological deductions which some may draw from the doctrines set forth in the confessions. Rather, subscription simply means that the doctrines in the confessions are to be embraced because they are derived from the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, CREC churches are expected to reject all doctrines or opinions that are contrary to or inconsistent with the confessions (excluding declared amendments or exceptions).
2. A candidate church must declare any exceptions to its confessional standards prior to becoming a CREC

member (Ex. 20:16; Col. 3:9). If a member church modifies its confessional standards in any way, including amendments and exceptions, the church must notify presbytery immediately. If presbytery determines that the modification places the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings according to Article IV.D.5.

- F. All members in good standing in a local CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church regardless of confessional differences between the churches. All CREC churches will handle problems arising from differences in how membership is reckoned from church to church (e.g. individual vs. household) with all charity and good faith, seeking to include one another's members.
- G. In the transfer of members from one CREC church to another, differences arising from issues such as membership, paedobaptism and paedocommunion, must be handled with pastoral sensitivity. Receiving churches do not have to adopt or practice such variations, but they should do all within their power to accommodate them.
- H. Controversies within a local congregation regarding matters arising from differences between our various confessions will not be adjudicated beyond the local church level. All churches agree to work cheerfully and carefully in their study of doctrinal differences, and to strive for like-mindedness with one another (Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16).
- I. The worship and work of each local congregation is ultimately to be governed by the teaching and godly examples supplied throughout all Scripture.

- J. After sending at least one candidate delegation to a stated meeting of presbytery, churches may be admitted to membership in a presbytery through a two thirds vote of the presbytery at its next stated meeting. The presbytery shall normally examine the pastor-elder delegation, especially with regard to their confessional status, sound doctrine, submission to CREC authority, and desire to uphold other CREC churches with all peace and love. They may remove themselves by whatever means their respective constitutions allow. When a church joins the CREC, this entire document through Article X must be adopted into that church's constitutional documents, according to the constitutional processes and standards of that church. The membership of the local church in the CREC is finalized at that point, and not before. New members shall make vows to the faithfulness and commitment to the churches and standards of the CREC. Likewise, current members should pledge to uphold the new church in prayer and love.
- K. In making a motion to seat a candidate church, a sponsoring church needs to be prepared to answer questions concerning the general health of that church and the likelihood of that church being able to embrace the CREC constitution when considered for full membership. The church which makes the motion to seat the candidate church must be the church which moves to receive the church into full membership when that issue comes before presbytery. The church which moves to receive the church into membership must be prepared to answer questions related to the doctrinal integrity of the church's confession, and the moral, spiritual, and covenantal health of the families of the officers.

- L. The candidacy of a church will not be allowed to extend beyond the third presbytery meeting from which that church was first seated—that is, two years after their first seating as a candidate church - unless a two-thirds vote by presbytery to override and extend the status beyond two years occurs.
- M. When a church joins the CREC, the existing ordination of all its officers is thereby accepted, and does not necessitate a formal examination as with other candidates. Nevertheless, observations and questions concerning elder qualifications may occur in the discussion of that church's potential admission.

Article IV. The Broader Assemblies

A. General Provisions

1. There are two broader assemblies in the CREC: the Presbytery and the Church Council. A minimum of two local churches is necessary to establish a presbytery. Geographical boundaries of presbyteries may overlap, but in considering this, presbyteries are urged to remember the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12; 3 John 9).
2. The authority of the broader assemblies of the CREC is set forth in various parts of this Constitution. The assemblies shall only deal with ecclesiastical matters in an ecclesiastical manner and hence their authority includes the following powers:
 - a) to hold regular and ad hoc meetings;
 - b) to amend their standards following due process;
 - c) to designate ad hoc committees;

- d)** to address matters referred to them by the session of a member church or by another CREC broader assembly;
- e)** to formulate plans of action concerning matters common to the churches;
- f)** to admit new churches into membership;
- g)** to evaluate men for ordination and recommend or not recommend candidates to the local churches;
- h)** to inquire into the spiritual health of member churches and to confer with other assemblies to this end;
- i)** to offer a timely pastoral voice to public issues of common concern;
- j)** to mediate in situations wherein a local church's session is at an impasse and when a local church's session is a party in a dispute either with one of its own members, with the session of another CREC church, with a CREC broader assembly, or with a non-CREC church;
- k)** to require mediation and non-binding arbitration, when appropriate, in order to reconcile brothers;
- l)** to protect its own purity and peace through judicial action following due process;
- m)** to censure or expel a member church following due process;
- n)** by two-thirds majority vote and pending judicial process, censure a member church or a CREC officer. A censure under this provision does not affect

a member church's voting rights or appeal rights in the broader assemblies.

3. No broader assembly may own property. All property within the CREC will be owned by the local congregations. General costs associated with hosting a broader assembly will be borne by the host church of the broader assembly. Specific costs (e.g. food and travel) will be borne by the delegates or sending churches.
4. The assemblies may form no standing committees or boards. Every committee must be *ad hoc* and automatically dissolve when it completes its assigned task, or submits its assigned report to the assembly. Assigned tasks may not be open-ended, allowing for *de facto* standing committees.
5. All retirement or pension plans for CREC ministers, teachers, missionaries, etc. will be under the authority, management and oversight of the local churches, and will not be the responsibility of the broader assemblies.
6. Books of Procedures
 - a) The broader assemblies shall keep a Book of Procedures that details particular methods for carrying out the various constitutionally-sanctioned tasks of an assembly. The broader assemblies are informed by the Book of Procedures, but not bound to it. Should an assembly act in exception to the Book of Procedures, the exception must be acknowledged and explained in the minutes. The Book of Procedures may be altered or amended at any time by a simple majority of an assembly. The various presbyteries may modify their respective Books of Procedures

between meetings of council. Each meeting of council will review these various modifications and harmonize the various Books of Procedures, in accordance with the provisions of the CREC Council Book of Procedures. Presbyteries may then approve further modifications for their own use, to be followed in turn by conciliar review. Maintenance and publication of a current Book of Procedures is the responsibility of the Presiding Minister.

- b) The Book of Procedures maintained by each Presbytery will utilize a standardized format, based upon the CREC Council Book of Procedures, with local practice set out separately by Article. The portion of the Presbytery Books of Procedure that is based upon the CREC Council Book of Procedures will be updated in conformity with the Council Book of Procedures as it is updated.
 - c) Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery will ensure that the numbering of the Book of Procedures he is responsible for maintaining is consistent with the Council Book of Procedures, which will require the renumbering of Articles which appear only on a local basis.
7. Assemblies may from time to time address issues not included in the historic creeds and confessions by means of overtures, memorials (see Article IX), or confessional statements.

B. Representation

- 1. Each congregation in a presbytery will send up to two elders as voting representatives to each meeting of

presbytery—ordinarily, one of whom is serving in the capacity of pastor if such exists in the local church. A voting representative of a congregation must be a member of that congregation, unless an exception is granted by presbytery.

2. The various presbyteries will each send an equal number of delegates to council, not including the Presiding Minister of Council among the number sent from his presbytery. Each council shall determine the number of delegates that will represent the presbyteries to the subsequent council; the number will be so determined as to create a council of between ten and eighteen delegates in all, not including the Presiding Minister of Council. If there are more than nine presbyteries, each presbytery will be represented at council with two delegates. Delegates to Council are to be elected at the first meeting of Presbytery following a regular meeting of Council, and at any subsequent stated meeting of presbytery at the discretion of presbytery. Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall maintain a current roster of Council delegates from that presbytery. Elected Council delegates must also be seated as Presbytery delegates during the same year as the Council meeting.
- C. Work and Authority of the Presiding Minister
1. Broader Assemblies will elect a Presiding Minister from their assembled delegates when that office is vacant. In the event that no more than one Council delegate is willing or able to serve or is nominated as Presiding Minister of Council, the assembled presbytery

delegates also shall be eligible for nomination as Presiding Minister of Council.

2. The Presiding Ministers of Presbytery and Council serve three-year terms. They assume authority and responsibilities following adjournment of the assembly meeting at which they are elected, which concludes the term of their predecessor.
3. All nominations for the position of Presiding Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. If no nominations are received prior to the posting of the agenda, nominations may be made from the floor of the assembly. Upon the establishment of a new presbytery, Council shall assign a year to begin the three-year rotation for the election of the Presiding Minister of that presbytery. The presbytery shall have the discretion to have its first Presiding Minister serve one or two additional years in order to meet this rotation requirement.
4. Term limitation
 - a) No Presiding Minister of Presbytery may serve two consecutive terms as Presiding Minister unless no qualified candidate is willing to serve (1 Peter 5:1–4). In such cases a two-thirds vote can extend the term of the current Presiding Minister.
 - b) The Presiding Minister of Council may be elected to a second consecutive term by a two-thirds vote of Council. A Presiding Minister of Council may not be elected to a third consecutive term unless the Council determines by a three-fourths majority that the circumstances are extraordinary.

5. Each Presiding Minister must be concurrently serving as a member of the local session. If a Presiding Minister ceases to serve in such a local office, then his term as Presiding Minister ceases at that time. Before his term is completed, a Presiding Minister may resign his position, or he may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the assembly.
6. Presiding Ministers *pro tempore*
 - a) Assemblies shall also elect a Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore*, to serve in cases of the Presiding Minister's absence, or to fill out the term of the Presiding Minister if the office of Presiding Minister becomes vacant.
 - b) When Council elects a Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore*, he shall also serve as Assistant to the Presiding Minister of Council.
7. Presiding Ministers properly act on behalf of the broader assemblies when actions have been declared in writing by the Presiding Minister and then included in that Minister's written report to the next duly constituted meeting of the broader assembly. At the meeting, the Presiding Minister's report must be received and acted upon by the broader assembly in accordance with the procedure described in the Meeting Protocols.
8. With regard to meetings, the Presiding Ministers of Presbytery and Council have the following authority and responsibilities: to prepare agendas, chair the meetings, submit reports of their work, call *ad hoc* meetings when necessary, and prepare minutes of the meetings to be posted in public. In addition, the Presiding Minister of Church Council shall bear the responsibility for

maintaining a true and accurate copy of the CREC Constitution, reflecting all amendments and additions thereto, and for making the Constitution available by means of electronic publishing.

9. The Presiding Minister of Presbytery and Council is also a spokesman and representative, whose authority and responsibilities in that capacity are as follows:
 - a) First, between meetings of the broader assembly, the Presiding Minister represents the broader assembly by initiating and taking prudent steps in furtherance of an action, which he must report to the broader assembly for ratification. In this way, the Presiding Minister represents the broader assembly for any action empowered to that assembly by this constitution, except for the following: admitting members; amending confessional or governmental standards; making formal recommendations (whether for or against) ministerial candidates for ordination; removing a member church; requiring arbitration; and adjudicating a trial.
 - b) Second, as representative of Presbytery or Council, the Presiding Minister has the authority to encourage and spiritually strengthen the sessions of elders within his broader assembly, meet with the Presiding Ministers of other broader assemblies, both within and without the CREC, to encourage them or to be encouraged, and to inquire about the spiritual and doctrinal health of other broader assemblies as well as the churches within his own assembly.

- c) Third, Presiding Ministers are to act according to the authority conferred to them by virtue of their office and all their actions are to be confined and limited to the authority specified by the Constitution of the CREC and they shall report to Presbytery or Council on their work as spokesman and representative. Additionally, prior to a Presiding Minister censuring a CREC church or officer he must receive approval from two other Presiding Ministers.
- d) Fourth, Presiding Ministers have the discretion and authority to appoint assistants, clerks, or, when the Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore* is not available, chairmen of assemblies, on a case-by-case basis.

D. Referrals, Appeals and Complaints

1. Finality of local church decisions.

Issues relating to the local congregation which may lawfully be brought before the broader assemblies are specified in this section. Except in the case of referrals, appeals, or complaints authorized and accepted under this section, all local church decisions are final and may not be reviewed by the broader assemblies (Presbytery or Council). Nothing in this section prevents local churches from seeking, or the broader assemblies from offering, informal counsel and advice. To the contrary, it is strongly encouraged as the best way of avoiding needless appeals and referrals.

2. Referrals.

A referral is a written request by a local church Session or any member of the Session or a regional Presbytery asking a broader assembly (Presbytery or Council, as

the case may be) to accept jurisdiction for deciding a matter that would normally be decided by the more local assembly. Normally, all matters should be handled at the local church level. However, should a local church Session or any of its members, or subsequently a Presbytery, determine that the matter implicates the policies or reputation of a broader assembly, or that it otherwise justifies the consideration of a broader assembly, the more local assembly or any member of a church Session or Presbytery may refer the matter to the broader assembly. All referrals should be sent to the Presiding Minister of the broader assembly. The Presiding Minister may, subject to approval of the broader assembly, exercise discretion to accept jurisdiction over the matter. The Presiding Minister may subsequently, subject to approval of the broader assembly, remand the matter to the more local assembly.

3. Appeals.

- a) Definition: An appeal is an action brought by a person or persons who are or were members of a local CREC congregation (including mission congregations), against whom a formal action has been taken by a CREC court and who are aggrieved by such formal action. It constitutes a request for removal of jurisdiction from one court to the next higher court.
- b) Any member or former member of a CREC church shall possess a right of appeal regarding judicial actions of which he may be or was the subject. All matters must be adjudicated at the level of the local church

before an appeal may be made. An appeal is normally filed with the Presbytery of which the local congregation is a member. However, an appeal may be made directly to Council. In such a case, the Presiding Minister of Council may, in his sole discretion, remand the case to the Presbytery from which it arises. At the conclusion of the matter at the Presbytery level, either party retains the right to make further appeal to Council.

- c) The broader assemblies, through the Presiding Minister, must refuse to hear frivolous or unconstitutional appeals. He is also free to deny an appeal if the appellant has overtly discredited himself in his manner of bringing the appeal or the judicial action appealed resulted in harmless error.
- d) A simple majority of the Court is necessary to decide the issue on behalf of Council; the decision of Council shall be considered settled and binding unless and until it is found by a future Council to be in conflict with the Word of God, the confessions, the CREC constitution, or the facts of the case. Decisions of Council may be appealed to a future Council, though the future Council is not obligated to hear such an appeal.

4. Complaints.

- a) Definition: A complaint is a request for a judicial decision to be made against a current CREC individual member or assembly on a charge that has not been adjudicated either because the local assembly refused to hear the case, the local assembly resolved the case without formal action, the local assembly

is one of the parties charged, or the complainant is from outside the CREC.

- b)** Complaints against individuals must be first addressed at the local church level. If the matter is resolved by a formal action of the Session, the right of appeal as set forth in Subsection 3 may be invoked. If formal action has been taken by a CREC assembly the matter is an appeal not a complaint.
- c)** A complaint against a CREC assembly may not be brought except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. To be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be husband and wife.
- d)** A complaint against the Session of a local church may be brought to a court above the local level only under the following circumstances:

 - i. when the Session of elders is accused of participating in or tolerating grievous dishonesty in subscription to the doctrinal or constitutional standards of the local church; or
 - ii. when the Session of elders is accused of gross misbehavior.
- e)** When accusations of grievous dishonesty or gross misbehavior on the part of the Session of a local church are made to or from other local churches or presented to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery or Council, the Session under accusation must be promptly informed. However, irresponsible accusations must be rejected and the member making the complaint should be directed back to his own Session.

- f) If a complaint is brought against a CREC assembly by someone who is not a member of a CREC church, the CREC, in Presbytery, Council, or through its appropriate Presiding Minister, can agree to hear the case if all of the following conditions have been met:
 - i. The Presiding Minister has established that one or more of the conditions in IV.D.4.a applies.
 - ii. The Presiding Minister has established that the government of the church where the complainant is a member affirms the truth of the Apostles' Creed, and is willing to give due weight, respect and consideration to the decision of the CREC.
 - iii. The charges as framed have two or three available and accountable witnesses listed for each specified complaint. To be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be husband and wife.
 - iv. The complainant and his church have not overtly discredited themselves in the manner of bringing the charges.
 - g) The broader assemblies must refuse to hear frivolous or unconstitutional complaints. Complaints presented to Council do not necessarily have to be first heard by Presbytery. However, Council, acting in Session or through the Presiding Minister, may choose to remand the case to Presbytery.
5. The decisions of the assemblies with regard to the local congregation are spiritually authoritative. If the elders

of a particular congregation choose to refuse the instruction of the broader church, the congregation may do so without deprivation of property. However, if their disregard of godly counsel is particularly egregious, the congregation may be removed from membership in the CREC, in accordance with constitutional procedure.

6. After a fair and open hearing at Presbytery, a congregation may be removed from membership in the Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of the Presbytery. Upon such occasions, the removed congregation retains the full right of appeal to Council.

Article V. Meeting Protocols

- A. The Presbytery will have at least one stated annual meeting. If two-thirds of the churches submit a written request to the Presiding Minister, an *ad hoc* presbytery meeting will be called. The decision to call for an *ad hoc* meeting of the Presbytery cannot be made at Presbytery.
- B. The Council will have a stated meeting every three years. In the year that Council meets, Presbyteries must have their annual meeting at the same place and time. If two thirds of the Presbyteries submit a written request to the Presiding Minister of Council, an *ad hoc* Council meeting can be called. The decision to call for an *ad hoc* meeting of Council cannot be made at Council. The requirement that Presbyteries convene at the same place and time as Council does not apply to *ad hoc* meetings of Council.
- C. At stated meetings of the broader assemblies, a delegate may not be counted to establish a quorum if he is not physically

present at the meeting. Delegates may participate in discussion by telephone, video conference, or other electronic communication, but may neither make motions nor vote on them. Nothing in this section applies to *ad hoc* meetings of the broader assemblies, which may be conducted by telephone or video conference, or other electronic communication.

D. Acts of the Broader Assemblies

1. Broader assemblies act properly when

- a) In a duly constituted meeting, the measure is moved, seconded, carried by the appropriate number of votes, entered in the minutes, and approved in the minutes; or
- b) An action is declared in writing by the Presiding Minister and then included in that Minister's written report to the next duly constituted meeting of the broader assembly. At the meeting, the Presiding Minister's report must be received by the broader assembly, his actions reviewed and voted upon, and either approved or disapproved, with the results recorded as such in the approved minutes.
- c) Actions of the Presiding Minister of Council on behalf of Council reported to all and approved by two-thirds of Presbyteries shall be deemed as approved by the CREC Council. When two-thirds of the Presbyteries ratify an action or adopt a report, it will be considered an act of Council. The Constitution and Confessional Standards cannot be altered or modified by this means.
- d) Upon approval by a three-fourths vote of Council, a Council Committee may recommend actions to all

the Presbyteries for a vote at their next stated Presbytery meeting. If three-fourths of the Presbyteries pass the recommended action, it shall be considered an action of Council.

- E. At votes of the broader assemblies, each delegate has one vote. The Presiding Minister may not vote, and so in those cases when a church has only one vote because one of its delegates has been elected Presiding Minister, the church may put forth a new delegate to take the place of the Presiding Minister. If the church cannot put forth a replacement, the remaining delegate has two votes. This rule shall apply only in a situation when a church cannot field a second delegate while the church's officer is serving as Presiding Minister of a broader assembly because the church lacks a sufficient number of installed officers to field a second delegate. It may not be used to give a single delegate a second vote if another officer of the church is installed but elects, for whatever reason, not to attend a meeting. If a newly elected Minister is needed to step into the chair during the meeting at which he is elected, his church's remaining delegate may have two votes at that meeting, notwithstanding the provisions of the previous two sentences in this section.
- F. Amending the agenda in stated meetings requires a two-thirds majority vote. The agenda for *ad hoc* meetings may include only those issues related to the stated reasons for calling the meeting.
- G. The agenda of any stated Presbytery or Council meeting must be posted on the public electronic page maintained by that assembly's Presiding Minister no less than thirty days and no more than sixty days prior to the meeting.

- H. Full minutes of all the assembly proceedings will be kept. The public minutes and records of the assembly will be published on a public electronic page maintained by the church of the Presiding Minister, with that Minister responsible for its contents. The Presiding Ministers shall ensure that approved minutes and current versions of the Books of Procedures for all Presbyteries and Council and of the CREC Constitution shall be available on the CREC web page. When revised, these documents shall be posted on or linked to the CREC web page within thirty days of their revision. Whenever new presbyteries are formed, the responsibility for the archives of the predecessor presbyteries remains with the new presbyteries having the same name. Minutes of confidential proceedings will be distributed in hard copy to all the member churches in the Presbytery. The costs associated with this process will be borne by the church of the Presiding Minister. Minutes must be posted within two weeks of their approval.
- I. The minutes of the broader assemblies will be approved after the Presiding Minister has circulated a draft following the adjournment of the assembly, and has allowed reasonable opportunity for revision. The minutes require a two-thirds majority to be approved, and lack of response from a delegate will be considered an affirmative vote. The Presiding Minister will oversee this process of finalizing assembly minutes within sixty days.
- J. The quorum for the Church Council will be two thirds of the voting delegates. The quorum for a Presbytery will be representation by two-thirds of the member churches in the Presbytery.

- K. Setting time limits for floor debate or moving the previous question requires a two-thirds vote.
- L. The broader assemblies have the authority to call for an executive session at their discretion by a simple majority vote.
- M. The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The delegates can make motions but cannot vote.
- N. A simple majority of an assembly may seat candidate and visiting delegations along with delegations of mission churches. Such delegations are encouraged to come as observers and friends, or as prospective members of the CREC. Such delegations may not vote, although they may address the assembly at the invitation of the Presiding Minister. They may not participate in debate without unanimous consent of the assembled delegates.
- O. A visiting delegation of a church, forming church, or interested group may be seated at the discretion of the Presiding Minister. Such seating is not part of the process of joining the CREC. Visiting delegations may not participate in the debates of the assembly.

Article VI. Missions

- A. All supported international or domestic CREC missionaries will not be sent by the Presbyteries or Church Council, but rather by the local church. As appropriate, the other churches in the Presbytery can offer encouragement and financial support, but the accountability of the missionaries will only be to the congregation, which is the sending body. As circumstances warrant, missionaries may seek a transfer of the

sending authority from one local church to another, with the details to be worked out between the missionary and the elders of the respective congregations involved.

- B.** Unless commissioned by, sent by, or ministering under the authority of a member church, individuals or ministries shall not be considered foreign missionaries or missions of the CREC.

Article VII. Confessional Standards and Revision

- A.** The CREC holds as its foundational confession of faith the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon. These confessions are included in Article X of this document.
- B.** The CREC holds generally to the system of doctrine reflected in the great creeds, catechisms, and confessions of the Reformation, and consequently requires all confederated churches to hold to at least one of the particular statements listed in Article III.C.
- C.** Revisions to any portion of these confessions of faith must have a first reading at a stated meeting of the Church Council, and may then be brought to a vote at the subsequent stated meeting. Three quarters of the Presbyteries are required to propose revisions to the confession of faith. Such proposed revisions will be placed on a list of potential revisions maintained by the Presiding Minister, to await consideration at the appointed time.
- D.** Three quarters of the Presbyteries may remove proposed revisions to the confession of faith at any time prior to the Council when they are to be voted on. A proposed change in

the confession requires a three quarters majority in order to pass. This process of revision applies only to the confessional statements, and not to other portions of this constitution.

- E. If a church's standing in the CREC is potentially affected by the process of confessional revision, that church has five years within which to make its first appeal to Presbytery.

Article VIII. Amendments

- A. This Constitution of the CREC, excluding the article containing the confessions of faith, may be amended at any time by a three quarters majority at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Church Council, which includes properly scheduled *ad hoc* meetings.

Article IX. Memorials

- A. Memorials state the position of the CREC on issues on which a confessional statement has not been made. Memorials are contained in the Book of Memorials and are incorporated by reference into this Constitution.
- B. A candidate or mission church must declare any exceptions or reservations to the memorials prior to its becoming a CREC member. Member churches must immediately notify the broader assembly of any changes to their position on the memorials. If Presbytery determines that the exceptions or reservations place the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings according to Article IV. D. 5.
- C. The process for adopting a memorial must involve a careful striving for like-mindedness. This deliberate process will help

us guard against various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). Any new memorial must be approved as a draft at a stated Council and adopted at a subsequent stated Council.

Article X. The Ecumenical Creeds

A. The Apostles' Creed (2nd century)

I/We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin, Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I/We believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

B. Nicene Creed; Constantinople (381 AD)

I/We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin, Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and

ascended into Heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I/we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And I/we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church; I/we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I/we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

C. Definition of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the

prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

Article XI. Reformed Evangelical Confession

(1) **A Westminster Creed (A modern selection from the 17th century Shorter Catechism)**

I believe man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever;

I believe God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth;

I believe there is but one true and living God; that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;

I believe God has foreordained whatever comes to pass; that God made all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good; and that God preserves and governs all His creatures and all their actions.

I believe our first parents, though created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, sinned against God, by eating the forbidden fruit; and that their fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery;

I believe God determined, out of His mere good pleasure, to deliver His elect out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer;

I believe the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and

so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever;

I believe Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

I believe Christ as our Redeemer underwent the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the cursed death of the cross, and burial; He rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended up into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father, and is coming to judge the world at the last day.

I believe we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit;

I believe God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life to escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin;

I believe by His free grace we are effectually called, justified, and sanctified, and gathered into the visible church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation;

I believe that we also are given in this life such accompanying benefits as assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end; that at death, we are made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory; and our bodies, being still united in Christ, rest in their graves, till the resurrection; and at the resurrection, we shall be raised up in glory, we shall openly be acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

(2) An Evangelical Statement (Adapted from the National Association of Evangelicals)

We *believe* the Bible to be the only inerrant Word of God. It is our only ultimate and infallible authority for faith and practice.

We *believe* that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful. He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all Creation but not limited by it. He is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from His sight. In all things He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character.

We *believe* the God we serve is holy, righteous, good, severe, loving and full of mercy. He created the heavens and earth, and everything in them, in the space of six ordinary days, and all very good. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of everything that has been made.

We *believe* in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

We *believe* in the full deity of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him together with the Father and the Son in the works of creation and redemption.

We *believe* that because of Adam's sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.

We *believe* that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that faith without works is dead.

We *believe* in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We *believe* in the resurrection of both the saved and lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

BOOK *of* MEMORIALS



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CREC
Book of Memorials



**COMMUNION OF REFORMED
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Introduction

Memorials state the position of the CREC on issues on which a confessional statement has not been made. Memorials are contained in the Book of Memorials and are incorporated by reference into the Constitution.

A candidate or mission church must declare any exceptions or reservations to the memorials prior to its becoming a CREC member. Member churches must immediately notify the broader assembly of any changes to their position on the memorials. If presbytery determines that the exceptions or reservations place the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings under Article IV.D.3.

The process for adopting a memorial must involve a careful striving for like-mindedness. This deliberate process will help us guard against various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). A memorial must be approved as a draft at a stated council and adopted at a subsequent stated council.

Memorial A. Ministerial Training

We believe that ministerial training is best conducted under the oversight of a local session, and should include an intense apprenticeship in a local body to test and develop the gifts, skills, knowledge, and spiritual qualifications of the candidate. At the same time, it is very difficult for many local congregations, with limited resources, to provide a candidate with a form of theological training that upholds high academic standards, equips the candidate in original languages, and so forth. Thus, we see a place for churches to send men to seminaries, while still overseeing and facilitating their training in other ways. In an ideal

scenario, seminaries would function as educational extensions of the Church, and seminary learning would be integrated into a comprehensive program of ministerial apprenticeship.

Memorial B. Confessional Revision

Our process of confessional revision is established so that the differences between our churches may be resolved over time by a careful striving for like-mindedness. The process is established to work in a slow and deliberate fashion so that we will be less susceptible to various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

Memorial C. Christian Education

All things are to be considered and conducted under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, including education, and especially the education of our covenant children. God has not charged the state to educate children but has explicitly commanded parents to bring up their children in the education and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4, Deut. 6:7). Given the importance of the task (Ps. 127:3–5, Deut. 6:7–9), and the impossibility of neutrality in education (Prov. 1:7, Matt. 12:30, Luke 6:40, Col. 2:1–10, 2 Cor. 10:3–5), we do heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor. Government schools tend to be, by decree and design, explicitly godless, and therefore normally should not be considered a legitimate means of inculcating true faith, holy living and a decidedly Christian worldview in the children of Christian parents. Therefore, we strongly encourage Christian parents to seek alternative ways of educating their children, whether by means of Christian schools or homeschooling. In cases, where Christian education is an impossibility,

parents must be active and diligent in overseeing the education of their children.

Parents who do not fully understand the indispensability of Christian education should be warmly received into membership. However, the leaders of Christ's church must thoroughly understand and plainly teach the divine imperative to disciple our children, the divine prohibition of rendering unto Caesar those who bear God's image (Matt. 22:20–21), the divine warning to those who cause their little ones to stumble (Matt. 18:6) and the divine promises to those who raise their children in faith (Deut. 7:9, Ps. 102:5–7, Ps. 103:17–18, Prov. 22:6, Luke 1:48–50, Acts 2:39).

Memorial D. Creation

The doctrine of creation lies at the heart of Christian living, deeply embedded within our assumptions about worship, knowledge, faith, celebration, beauty, and redemption. In recent decades, many conservative evangelicals have been moved by the science of the day to oppose the historic view of creation in six sequential days of common length, several millennia in the past. Instead, they hold that the bare ideas of creation presented in Genesis have little to do with the actualities of creation. Falsely pitting poetry and symbolism against history, they distort the text of Scripture and divorce ideas from the created order in ancient Gnostic fashion.

Science is a legitimate and noble pursuit, as an aspect of the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26–28), and Christians should not be fearful or ungrateful for advances in scientific knowledge and technology. Indeed, the best scientific developments have been the fruit of an essentially Christian worldview. Advances in medicine, transportation, communication, computers, etc. are God's good gifts. We therefore encourage the cultivation of the scientific

enterprise on the basis of fully biblical principles. Science and the gospel are not inherently antagonistic.

Memorial E. Terrorism

1. Because God is the Sovereign Lord, all of history is under His control. Nothing happens apart from His knowledge and without His divine decree (Dan. 4:34–35). Therefore, we must view acts of terror in the light of God’s sovereignty rather than from the carnal point of view. It is God who brings disaster upon men and nations for His holy and righteous purposes (Gen. 50:19; Amos 3:6). While not denying that wicked individuals commit these acts, we affirm that God is active in these events for His glory and honor (Acts 2:22–24; 4:24–30).
2. Many formerly Christian nations in the West, particularly the United States of America and Canada, have grievously sinned against the true and living God, and His Son Jesus Christ, and have slipped into wholesale idolatry and polytheism. We have done this in the name of tolerance and acceptance, tolerating everything except the truth. Civil and religious representatives tell damnable lies when they say that the faiths of Abraham and Mohammed are the same, that Yahweh and Allah are the same, that the living God wants His people to commune with infidels, and that we ought to regard as enemies those who believe in such a thing as truth (Ex. 20:3, John 4:22, Eph. 4:3–6). These are lies which we believe to our own destruction. Therefore, God has brought and continues to bring judgments upon us as a warning to all that turn their face against the living God. The only faithful response is confession of sin, drawing near to Jesus Christ, and repentance (Joel, *passim*). Apart from

repentance we will find no blessing for our nations in these events, particularly if we band together to pursue the spread of humanistic goals. It is appropriate for nations to respond to terrorist attacks by using military force in order to bring terrorists to justice. Furthermore, it is lawful for believing Christians to participate in such military responses. However:

- It is not lawful for women to be mustered for combat service, for our Lord has declared it an abomination for women to don the martial attire of a man (Deut. 22:5). Christian fathers must protect their daughters from being seduced or coerced into such a circumstance, and the Church must support them as they do so. It is the duty of men not women to protect their countries (Jer. 51:30).
- It is not lawful to respond to terrorist attacks in the name of false gods or with a proud and arrogant spirit (Isa. 10:5–19). No nation has the right to expect God to bestow blessing upon any military response so long as that nation embraces false gods and practices wickedness. In the West, we must repent the idols of pluralism, the carnage of abortion, the mustering of our daughters for combat service, and the honoring of the perversion of sodomy. Though it is lawful and right to respond militarily, if a nation protects these and other corruptions as a way of life, it cannot expect to enjoy God's blessing upon such endeavors, or anything other than continued judgment both on the battlefield and off.

Therefore, mindful of the judgments of God (2 Cor. 5:9–11; 1 Thess. 4:6; Rev 18:8; 19:1–5, 11), the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches urges our leaders and peoples to fear God,

to honor His Christ, to confess our sins, and to seek His blessing as we respond to terrorist attacks (Pss. 2:10–12; 110).

Memorial F. Homosexuality

Courage, Clarity, and Charity: A Phoenix Declaration
January 2003

As Christian ministers standing in the stream of historic Christianity and rooted in the Evangelical heritage, we believe it is time to speak with courage, clarity, and charity to the issue of homosexuality that is besetting the Church at large. Confessing the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God (Isaiah 40:8; Luke 4:31–32; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21), we believe that God has spoken clearly and sufficiently to the issue of human sexuality. In accordance with this belief, we must state that homosexuality in its varied forms, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, is out of accord with God’s design for human sexuality and is sinful, therefore, in the eyes of God (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:18–25; 19:1–28; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:8–10; 2 Peter 2:6–8). The only remedy for this, and all other sin, is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11). As ministers of this glorious gospel of God’s grace, who are striving after faithfulness to God and His Word, we state the following as a call to the Church to return to faithfulness in a spirit of repentance.

Courage

In our time, many who are recognized as clergy are calling for and promoting a revision of the historic Christian understanding of God’s Word concerning homosexuality. This teaching is out of

accord with the Bible and leads the flock of Christ astray. Such teaching arrogantly overturns God's holy standard dealing with human sexuality. Love for Christ and His Church compels us to speak truthfully about that which is false. Courage is needed to refute those who would call evil good and good evil. The example and teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles show clearly that false teachers are to be exposed and refuted so that the Church is protected (Acts 20:28–31; Romans 16:17–18; Titus 1:9; 2 Peter 2:1–3). In an age that tolerates everything but the truth, courage is needed to speak the truth in love in an uncompromising manner.

Clarity

The Bible provides a clear and consistent teaching in opposition to homosexuality. Modern attempts to subvert this clear teaching are without substance. The Word of God must not be held prisoner to alien philosophical or cultural agendas. If allowed to speak with its own authority, the Biblical teaching is seen to be utterly opposed to homosexuality and its attendant practices. Furthermore, the historic testimony of Christian interpretation is in perfect harmony with this position. Contrary to popularized agendas, the Bible and those who have officially taught Christianity throughout the ages have recognized the sinfulness of homosexuality. The interpretations of such teachers as Athenagorus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine are unanimous. The modern attempt to revise the Biblical teaching, claiming Biblical and interpretive support, is a theological and moral novelty.

Charity

Love for neighbor compels us to remind those who are caught in the depths of sin that God in His holiness will not be mocked—He

will bring judgment against sin. It is not an act of oppression or hate to point out the Divine condemnation of homosexuality. Rather, it is an act of kindness. We are opposed to the ill-treatment that many people in favor of homosexuality have experienced; yet we deny that our disagreement and presentation of the Bible's teaching with regard to this subject constitutes ill treatment, hatred, or bigotry. In speaking the truth about the nature of homosexuality and God's opposition to it, we simultaneously hold forth the message of God's grace. God can and does forgive those who forsake the sin of homosexuality. God can and does bring freedom from bondage and cleansing of conscience to those who turn to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance (1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Romans 3:21–26; 6:1–14; Ephesians 2:1–10; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 10:19–22). It is false compassion to accept and affirm those who are unrepentant in homosexuality. Charity demands that we speak the truth about God's holiness and His gospel.

Memorial G. Worship

1. We believe that Lord's Day worship is our highest privilege, our greatest duty, and our deepest joy.¹ God has created us for just this purpose: to worship Him, and to be transformed by Him as we worship.²
2. We believe that in worship the people of God are engaged by the Spirit and drawn into the Father's presence as living sacrifices in union with the Risen Christ.³ In Lord's Day worship, God renews His covenant relationship with His people

1 Ex. 20:8–11, Heb. 4:9; Heb. 10:25, Deut. 26:10, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 27:4, Ps. 65:4, Ps. 73:25; Heb. 4:16.

2 Is. 43:21; 1Cor. 6:20; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:1–2; Jn. 4:23.

3 Lam. 3:41; Ps. 25:1; 28:2; Eph. 2:12–22, Rom. 12:1–2; Heb. 12:18–25; Heb. 8:5; Rev. 4:1.

by serving them and them serving Him.⁴ He draws near to us to draw us near to Him.⁵

3. We believe that in Lord's Day worship, we are gathered together in the presence of the living God among a glorious assembly consisting of angels, the church militant on earth, and the church triumphant in heaven.⁶
4. We believe that each week in worship, through the Lord's service to us and our service to Him, our Triune Creator and Redeemer gives us the covenant gifts of glory, knowledge, and life, in and through the assurance of our forgiveness, the preaching of the Word, and the partaking of the Lord's Supper.⁷ While bestowing these gifts upon us in worship, at the same time, He graciously accepts our praise and thanksgiving of Him.⁸ In re-orienting us around His covenant,⁹ He empowers and calls us to live in terms of His new creation.¹⁰
5. We believe that God uses our worship to change us and the world.¹¹ We are transformed by the grace of God's presence,¹² and leave worship with a renewed sense of, and commitment to, mission,¹³ discipleship,¹⁴ and community.¹⁵ Biblical worship results in changed lives, Spirit-empowerment, and impacts the world for Christ. Furthermore, God is pleased

4 Is. 66:20–22, Lk. 22:19; Lev. 1–5.

5 Deut. 4:7; Rev. 3:20, Ex. 24:12; 2 Cor. 6:16b–18; Heb. 10:19 with Heb. 9:11,12.

6 Rev. 9–12, Heb. 12:22–24, Eph. 2:6.

7 Rom. 3:23; 8:30; Jn. 17:22; Rom. 1:21–23; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:2,3; Ro. 2:7–10; 1Jn. 2:20, 27; Ps. 115, Rev. 21:11, Jn. 6:53–58, 1Pet. 1:23.

8 Ps. 51:17, Ez. 20:40–41.

9 Ps. 50:5; Mt. 26:28; Heb 8:6; 12:24.

10 Mt. 28:16–20; Jn. 20:19–23.

11 Ps. 22:25–27; Gen. 22:9–18.

12 Rom. 12:1–2; 2Cor. 3:18.

13 Mt. 28:19a.

14 Mt. 28:19b, 20a.

15 Is. 55:12; Rom. 15:13–14; Mt. 28:20b.

to hear and answer our prayers, particularly those that ascend in the Lord's Day worship of the Church.¹⁶ He hears our prayers for the nations and in answering us makes manifest His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.¹⁷

6. We believe that worship should be informed and governed by the Bible in its entirety.¹⁸ In constructing our liturgies, we are to pay particular attention to those portions of God's Word that are specifically given to inform us of what God desires in worship. These portions include, but are not limited to, descriptions of patriarchal worship, Levitical worship,¹⁹ and Tabernacle of David worship,²⁰ which all point toward the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, whose self-offering and victorious resurrection accomplished our salvation.²¹ This final work of our Savior provides the basis for the resultant transformation of worship spoken of by the Apostles in the New Covenant.²² We are, of course, prohibited from returning to the practices of animal sacrifices, for this would deny our faith in the perfect and complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. We believe that these portions of the Bible give us a divine pattern and sequence of worship,²³ and provide us a detailed understanding of the benefits of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.²⁴ These benefits include

16 1Kg. 8:26–53; Mt. 18:19–20; Rev. 8:3–6.

17 Mt. 9:38; Mt. 6:9–10.

18 2Tim 3:16–17; Is. 8:20; Ex. 20:4–6; Heb. 8:5.

19 Lev. 1–7.

20 1Chr. 16:1 ff; 1Chr. 25; 2Sam. 6; 2Chr. 15:14–15; 23:18; 29:25–30; 35:15; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:45–46; Acts 15:16,17.

21 Jn. 1:29; 1Cor. 5:7; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:11–14.

22 Acts 15:16–17; Heb. 7:12; Heb. 8:5; 10:19–22; 9:23, 24.

23 Lev. 9:22.

24 Jn. 1:29.

purification from our sins,²⁵ transformation of our persons,²⁶ acceptance of our work and tribute,²⁷ and peace with God and men.²⁸ Through Biblical worship, the Lord assures us of the forgiveness of our sins,²⁹ the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of renewal in our lives,³⁰ the requirement and acceptability of vocation,³¹ and the promise of the increase and maturation of Christian community.³²

8. We believe that these portions of the Bible also teach us that each of these glorious aspects of worship are to be set in the context of beautiful music that is maturing in both voice and instrument, to the praise of Christ the King.³³
9. We believe that the proper implementation in love of the above requires a practical understanding of all that Scripture teaches, including an understanding of lesser and greater matters, Christian forbearance with our brothers, liberty in worship which is not self-willed, an avoidance of an over-scrupulous zeal, and a desire to maintain a Biblical catholicity as we build on the work of the historic church.³⁴

25 Lev. 4:5; Heb. 9:26; 10:12.

26 Lev 1; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 4:16; Gal. 6:15.

27 Lev. 2; Eccl. 9:7.

28 Lev. 3; Rom. 5:1.

29 Lev. 4-5; Col. 1:14.

30 Lev. 1; Rom. 12:1-2.

31 Lev. 2; 2Thes. 3:10-12; Rom. 15:27; 1Cor. 9:13-14.

32 Lev. 3; 1Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:11-13; Jn. 17:20.

33 1Chr. 15:16; 25:6,7; Ps. 98:4-6; 144:9; 150; Rev. 5:8; 14:2-3; 15:2-3.

34 Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:2.

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CREC Council Book of Procedures



COMMUNION OF REFORMED
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Article I. Preface

The CREC council Book of Procedures provides standard operating procedures for both the Council and the Presbyteries. Each presbytery must adopt the current version of the CREC Council Book of Procedures as the foundation for its own book of procedures, and may add additional procedural standards to its own book of procedures provided the additional standards are not in conflict with the CREC Council Book of Procedures or the CREC Constitution and bylaws. If there is good cause for not following these standard operating procedures in a given situation, the reason for the deviation must be stated in writing and approved by the relevant broader assembly.

Article II. Definitions

The following definitions apply with regard to terms used in the Constitution and this Book of Procedures:

1. **Adopt**

When the assembly wishes to approve and endorse assembly minutes or the factual findings or opinions of a committee as set forth in a report, or when the assembly wishes to implement the recommendations or resolutions of a committee as set forth in a report, the proper motion is to “adopt” the minutes or specified portion(s) of the report. If a committee report contains statements of fact or opinion which are only for the assembly’s information, the assembly may simply “receive” the report, unless the assembly wishes to endorse and assume responsibility for the statements, in which case the assembly should “adopt” them. (Robert’s Rules ¶¶33, 54).

2. **Mediation**

The attempt to settle a dispute through the active participation of a third party (the “mediator”) who works with disputing parties to clear up misunderstandings, heal offenses, find points of agreement, and persuade them to agree on a fair and just resolution. The role of mediator may be performed by an individual or a committee.

3. **Non-binding Arbitration**

An informal mini-trial conducted by a third party or panel in an attempt to assist disputing parties to more objectively assess the respective merit of their positions and the likely outcome of a formal trial. The outcome of non-binding arbitration is advisory only.

4. **Present**

An item (e.g., committee report, correspondence, etc) is “presented” to the assembly when a delegate reads or, as appropriate, summarizes or describes the item to the assembly and hands it to the presiding officer or secretary. (Robert’s Rules ¶53)

5. **Ratify**

When the assembly wishes to confirm the action(s) of a Presiding Minister under Article IV.C.7 of the Constitution, or to make valid a past action by an officer, committee, or delegate which requires prior approval of the assembly, the proper motion is to “ratify” the action. By definition, the assembly may ratify only such actions of its Presiding Ministers, officers, committees, or delegates as it had the right to authorize in advance. (Robert’s Rules ¶39).

6. Receive

A report or other item is “received” by the assembly when it is presented to the assembly as specified in these definitions. (Robert’s Rules ¶¶53–54). It is not necessary to move to “receive” a presented item, for it has already been “received.” “Receiving” an item does not indicate approval, endorsement, or adoption by the assembly.

Article III. Procedure for Receiving New Members into Presbytery

1. The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The delegates can make motions but cannot vote.
2. Delegates about to become new members shall normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.).
3. When admitting a new church into membership in the CREC, the Presiding Minister shall ask the following questions of the church’s delegation:
 - a) Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to take hold on eternal life, to which you called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses?
 - b) Do you, with all the officers of your church, wholeheartedly and willingly acknowledge before God that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments,

are the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

- c) Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive, adopt and believe the Doctrinal Standards of your church (apart from declared exceptions), as a faithful interpretation of the teaching of the Word of God?
 - d) Do you, with all the officers of your church, pay careful attention to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood?
 - e) Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Communion: to keep with them the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to pray for them, to comfort them, to encourage them, to admonish them, and to rule with them in accordance with the Constitution of this Communion and in full submission to the Word of God?
4. When affirmative answers have been given, the Presiding Minister will then read the following statement, and then ask the delegates of all member churches to signify their agreement with a corporate “amen.”

“Together with all the officers of our churches, we receive you and welcome you, our brethren, into membership in this communion. To you we commit our blessings, our prayers, and the right hand of fellowship as you join with us in the rule of the church.”

Article IV. Mission Churches

1. Purpose

To provide guidelines for the establishment of a relationship between a sponsoring church (i.e., mother church) and a mission work (i.e., daughter church), and to set forth the conditions for the particularization of that mission church.

2. Definitions

- a) Mission church: A constituted body of Christians under the oversight of a particularized church whose intent is to establish a new particularized church.
- b) Particularized church: A constituted body of Christians who have met all the criteria established by this policy to become a separate church governed by its own session.

3. Procedure

a) Mission Church

A church shall be considered a mission church of a member CREC church when the following conditions have been met:

- i. A constitution has been written to define and govern the mission work.
 - (1) The mother church approves the constitution and doctrinal standards of the mission church (which may or may not be identical to the mother church's).
 - (2) The mother church appoints a session *pro tempore* over the mission church.

(3) These actions put the mission church into existence.

ii. Under this constitution and session *pro tempore*:

(1) New members can be received.

(2) The mission's constitution may be modified by its own amendment process.

(3) New officers may be examined, ordained and installed.

a) The Session

i. The session *pro tempore* of the mission church shall be composed of all or some designated part of the session of the mother church along with any duly elected and installed pastors/elders of the mission church until the rest of the conditions for particularization have been fulfilled.

ii. The session *pro tempore* shall not be the session of the mother church, but only the session of the mission church.

iii. Upon the particularization of a church, the pastors/elders from the mother church who had been assigned to serve *pro tempore* on the mission church's session shall no longer be members of the new session. However, should the new church deem it useful, these former session members may continue to serve in an *ex-officio* capacity for a season.

iv. Acts of session *pro tempore* must be appealed first to the regular session of the mother church, whose acts may in turn be appealed to the CREC, as per Constitutional procedure.

c) Conditions for Particularization

- i.** The mission church shall have its own constitution and bylaws.
- ii.** The mission church shall have been formally constituted for not less than two years.
- iii.** The mission church shall have at least two member pastors/elders, not including pastors/elders of the mother church who have been assigned to serve pro tempore on the mission church's session.
- iv.** The mother church may require other conditions.
- v.** The session of the mother church has formally acknowledged that conditions for particularization (i-iv above) have been met.
- vi.** Presbytery acknowledges that conditions i-v above have been met, and does so by receiving the mission church into presbytery membership.
- vii.** Existing churches that have been constituted for at least two years, have two or more local elders, and can sustain themselves financially may come under the care of a member CREC church as a "Mission Church," and may be considered for full Member status at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

d) Relationship to the CREC

- i.** All mission churches of CREC member churches shall automatically have mission status in the CREC.
- ii.** This mission status may be maintained until the mission is particularized.

- iii. Once conditions are met for particularization, the mission church shall be eligible for full CREC membership at the next CREC presbytery meeting.
 - iv. As extensions of a member CRE church, all mission churches shall meet the constitutional and doctrinal requirements of the CREC.
 - v. As extensions of a member CREC church, all mission churches shall have the protection of the CREC courts and other CREC constitutional protections and requirements.
- e) Ordination of Teaching and Ruling Elders**
- i. As the daughter church is under the oversight of the mother church (a CREC member), all ordination exams shall be conducted under the oversight of the mother church and according to CREC guidelines.
 - ii. The actual ordination and installation of officers shall be conducted under the oversight of the mission church session *pro tempore*.
- f) Termination of Relationship**
- i. Termination of the relationship between mother and daughter church can happen in two ways:
 - (1) The daughter church becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership;
 - (2) A decision by the mother church's session to terminate the relationship.
- g) Visits**
- i. It is recommended that representatives of the mother church visit the mission church on a regular basis

(perhaps quarterly), sometimes to conduct meetings or worship, and sometimes to observe.

- ii. It is also recommended that the mission church cover the expenses of the mother church (e.g., travel and honorarium).

Article V. Election of Presiding Ministers

1. All nominations for the position of Presiding Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. Churches wishing to nominate candidates for the position of Presiding Minister or Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall submit their nominations to the Presiding Minister at least thirty days in advance of the opening of the meeting.
2. Following the election of a Presiding Minister, the delegates may nominate candidates for the office of Presiding Minister *pro tempore*. The nominees need not be limited to the delegates nominated for the office of Presiding Minister.
3. The Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall be elected according to the procedure delineated in Article IV.C of the CREC Constitution.
4. Election of Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore*
 - a) If there are no nominations pre-posted on the agenda, the Presiding Minister shall receive nominations from the floor from any delegate in order to create a roster of candidates.
 - b) In order for a nominee to be recognized as a candidate his nomination must be seconded on the floor and the nominee must express his consent to be a candidate. The nomination and second may not come from two delegates representing the same church.

- c) In due time, the Presiding Minister will close the nominations and identify the candidates. A motion from the floor to close nominations shall require a two-thirds vote.
- d) The Presiding Minister will open discussion about the candidates. Delegates may use this time to ask questions of the candidates or elicit statements from them. Delegates also may speak for or against any candidate.
- e) A roll call vote will be taken unless by majority vote or at the Presiding Minister's discretion, a vote by ballot is requested. The candidate receiving a majority of votes will be elected Presiding Minister. The outgoing Presiding Minister will tally the votes and then shall declare the results of the election.
- f) If there is only one candidate, he must receive at least a two-thirds majority of the assembled delegate votes to fill the position of Presiding Minister. In elections with more than one candidate, a candidate must receive the votes of more than 50% of the delegates present and voting to become Presiding Minister-elect. If no candidate meets this requirement, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and another vote taken. In the event of a tie vote between two candidates, the Presiding Minister will break the tie, if necessary, to elect a Presiding Minister or eliminate a candidate from the ballot.

Article VI. Conduct of Meetings

1. The official language of the broader assemblies of the CREC will be English.
2. All meetings will be conducted in English.

3. Any [non-English speaking]¹ delegates to Presbytery or Church Council must be accompanied by an interpreter.
4. Robert's Rules of Order exist to facilitate the decision-making process at meetings. They help ensure that discussion is clear and that the rights of both the majority and the minority are protected. Before each meeting, the Presiding Minister shall distribute the summary of some of the basic rules, redacted from Robert's Rules and set forth in Appendix A, which will familiarize all attendees with them and help our meetings run more smoothly and keep discussion on track.

Article VII. Formation of New Presbyteries

1. Specifications
 - a) Future proposals to form new presbyteries in the CREC shall, to the greatest extent feasible, conform to these Guidelines:
 - i. The optimum size of a presbytery in the CREC shall be ten churches;
 - ii. When a presbytery exceeds a membership of twenty churches, it shall begin taking steps to propose to Council the formation of a new presbytery, except as, after giving due consideration to the existing condition and strength of its constituent churches, the presbytery deems it unwise to propose division at that time. In this case, presbytery shall report said decision to Council;
 - iii. The factors to be considered in forming new presbyteries shall include the following:

1 Bracketed language inserted by Presiding Minister Jack Phelps for clarification.

- (1) to the extent feasible, each new presbytery should contain at least ten churches;
 - (2) each new presbytery should include members that have long ministerial experience (graybeards);
 - (3) each new presbytery should contain members that have a good working acquaintance with CREC culture;
 - (4) each new presbytery should contain some churches of significant size (not all small churches);
 - (5) the churches of each new presbytery should share geographic proximity, and have historic connections to one another;
 - (6) the preference of international churches (and domestic churches if circumstances warrant), should be given significant weight when assigning them to a particular presbytery.
- a) Newly formed presbyteries will be named on the model of Anselm and Augustine, that is, after figures from Church history.
 - b) Each new presbytery shall, within one year of its formation, publish on its web page a brief biography of the saint for which it is named.

Article VIII. Notification of Presiding Ministers

1. The session of elders of each CREC church shall notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery under the following circumstances:
 - a) Before formally admonishing a minister (pastor) or elder (formal admonishment consists of an act of the session,

- entered into the minutes and delivered to the minister or elder verbally or in writing).
- b) Before dismissing a minister (pastor) or elder or calling for his resignation.
2. Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall report to the Presiding Minister of Council the same information.

Article IX. Procedures for Conducting a Presbytery Trial

1. Establishment of Judicatory
 - a) All presbyters are voting members of the judicatory with the exception of those who, to set aside conflicts of interest, are removed from the judicatory by a three-fourths majority of presbytery. Should the Presiding Minister be removed in this way, presbytery will elect a Presiding Minister *pro tempore* to moderate the hearing.
2. Introduction to the case
 - a) A written complaint (including any charges or specifications), provided by the Complainant, is published to each member of the judicatory and read by the Presiding Minister.
 - b) Here or at any later point in the introduction to the case, any member of the judicatory may interject a motion to dismiss the case. If the motion carries by a three-fourths majority, the hearing will not proceed and the matter will be regarded as settled. The presbytery will not hear frivolous matters.
 - c) The Presiding Minister invites the Complainant to introduce the matter.

8. Deliberation and Judgment
 - a) Deliberation begins with prayer. Judgment requires a simple majority of the judicatory. Minority opinions, if formally offered, must be received into the record.
9. Closing prayer is offered by the Presiding Minister or his designee.

Article X. Procedures for Appealing Decisions

1. Amidst any appeals procedure within the CREC, reconciliation between parties will remain a central objective. Such reconciliation may render it unnecessary to press these procedures through to completion.
2. The Presiding Minister of the appropriate judicatory will determine whether a party is qualified to bring an appeal.
3. Appellant will notify both the Respondent and the Presiding Minister of the appropriate judicatory of his intent to appeal within four weeks of the decision he is appealing.
4. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Presiding Minister per his instructions, and the Appellant must supply to the Respondent a copy of all materials relevant to his appeal.
5. Once an appeal is submitted, it cannot be withdrawn without the approval of the Presiding Minister.
6. The Presiding Minister may seek the counsel of other presbyters to assist in his decision to hear or dismiss the case.
7. If the Presiding Minister chooses to allow the case to move forward, he shall appoint a court of at least three presbyters (representing at least three different CREC churches, excluding conflicts of interest, with no more than two from any

one church) to hear the appeal and to render a decision. The court's decision will be regarded as the decision of presbytery, unless it is nullified by the full presbytery.

8. The court shall report its findings to the full presbytery. By vote, the presbytery will either sustain or, if there is cause, nullify the court's decision.

Article XI. Ordination Examinations

1. General Provisions

- a) The pattern established in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:1–2) is that Timothy was to commit the things that he had learned to those faithful men who would be able to teach others. Having established elders in every city, it further was the pattern that this process of succession was perpetuated by those already established in the office. This task clearly requires that a determination be made as to whether a man is characterized by a faithful life and whether he is skilled in teaching others.
- b) Our purposes are therefore twofold: first we must examine a Teaching Elder candidate's manner of life and doctrine and secondly his ability to teach scripturally. We believe that it is the local session that primarily carries the burden of this critical determination.
- c) As a presbytery, our purpose is to provide assistance to the local session in this examination, while recognizing the limitations of a presbytery to review a pastoral candidate. First, it is the session that is preeminently qualified to examine a candidate's manner of faithful life and ability

to teach. Second, it is prudent for the session to seek the accountability of the broader church as a protection to the flock, and it is a good testimony when they do so. Third, the broader church, as represented by the Presbytery, is generally better able to examine a candidate's doctrinal preparedness, ability to use the original languages, and his exegetical abilities, and knowledge of English Bible.

- d) The Committee of Presbytery (see paragraph 2.b., below) shall inquire of the local session as to the adequacy of the teaching elder (pastor or minister) candidate's compensation package (salary, housing, insurance, etc.).
- e) Ultimately, the session is charged with faithfully considering the wisdom of the broader church and is responsible before God for the ordination of a candidate.
- f) Local churches wishing to call previously un-ordained men to serve as pastors in their churches shall ordinarily have these candidates successfully complete the presbytery ordination exam process before having them move to the area and assume pastoral duties.

2. Ordination Examination Process

- a) The examination process and related matters is described fully in the document Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination, which is Appendix B of this Book of Procedures.
- b) The examination process for ordination to the office of pastor (teaching elder) is divided into three phases: 1) Preliminary interview of the candidate by the Ordination Examination Committee appointed by the Presiding

Minister of Presbytery (hereafter “Committee”); 2) A written examination overseen by the Committee; and 3) An oral examination administered at Presbytery, overseen by the Committee.

- c) Steps of the Ordination Examination Process
- i. A local church informs the Presiding Minister of Presbytery that it has a candidate for ordination. This must be done no later than four months before the meeting of Presbytery;
 - ii. The Presiding Minister appoints an Ordination Examination Committee of five to oversee the evaluation; the majority of members of the committee ordinarily have to be ordained ministers/pastors/teaching elders under Book of Procedures Article XI, or recognized as ministers/pastors/teaching elders under Book of Procedures Article XII.
 - iii. The Committee chooses a chairman;
 - iv. The Committee interviews the candidate, assessing his educational background and general preparedness to do well at the oral exam. This must be completed no later than three months prior to the Presbytery meeting;
 - v. The chairman of the Committee provides the prescribed CREC written examination to the session;
 - vi. The candidate takes the written exam;
 - vii. The chairman distributes the *Sample Questions for Oral Examination* document to the Committee members and the candidate;

- viii.** The candidate submits two exegetical papers (see the guidelines for these papers in Appendix B of the BOP), two sermons (one on an Old Testament text, one on a New Testament text), his answers to the written exam, and a written biographical statement explaining his Christian experience, ministerial aspirations, and confessional views (including exceptions to the confessional standards to which he plans to subscribe) to the Committee. This must be done no later than two months prior to the Presbytery meeting;
- ix.** The Committee works with the candidate, preparing him for an oral examination on the floor of Presbytery;
- x.** When the Committee is satisfied that the candidate will do well at the oral exam at Presbytery, the Committee informs the Presiding Minister, who schedules the exam. This must be done no later than one month prior to the Presbytery Meeting;
- xi.** The Committee posts to the CREC Elder Email List a public notice of the candidate's scheduled oral exam at least thirty days prior to the exam;
- xii.** The oral exam is then conducted on the floor of Presbytery, overseen by the Committee, and allowing questions from the assembled Presbyters;
- xiii.** After the exam, the Presbytery, in executive session with the candidate present, deliberates and votes to either recommend the candidate for ordination, or not;
- xiv.** The Committee then writes a report of Presbytery's action, and any other relevant information, and sends it to the candidate and the local session.

3. Recommendation Procedures

- a) At the end of the oral examination, Presbytery will, by majority vote, recommend or not recommend the candidate for ordination at that time. The Presbytery will report its decision and any other recommendations to the session of the local congregation. If the Presbytery does not recommend ordination and the session determines to proceed with ordination against the recommendation of the Presbytery, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister the reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3 of the Constitution.

4. Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

- a) While we believe in the holy catholic Church and therefore accept the ordination of ministers outside of the CREC, it is both wise and proper for their credentials to be examined. It is recommended, though not obligatory, that CREC churches seek the wisdom of the broader church in assessing these credentials. Assessing the credentials and views of an ordained minister is not the same process as an ordination examination and is not to be as comprehensive. The aim in examining a transferring minister is to assist the local congregation in confirming orthodoxy and competence.
 - i. When the church desires to call a man to the office of pastor who was ordained outside of the CREC or

who is not a minister in the CREC, the elders of the church shall inform the Presiding Minister.

- ii.** The Presiding Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination by appointing a committee composed of three CREC presbyters. This may take place at a time determined by the Presiding Minister, in coordination with the local church elders.
- iii.** The Committee will provide a report of its decision and any other recommendations to the Presiding Minister of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the Committee recommends the call of the minister, the church may proceed with the call. At the next Presbytery, the minister will then be received into the CREC as an ordained minister with a report from the Committee and an opportunity for a brief examination on the floor of the Presbytery. If the session determines to proceed with the call against the recommendation of the Committee, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3 of the Constitution.
- iv.** This process of assessing the credentials of a minister being called to a CREC church is described fully in the document Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination (Appendix B).

5. **The Ordination of Elders Not Recognized in the CREC as Pastors (“Ruling Elders”)**

The presbytery is not involved in the process of a “ruling elder’s” examination or ordination. Nevertheless, since all elders are required to perform the same primary function of ruling and overseeing the church as do pastors, a similar standard of Biblical and doctrinal knowledge should be encouraged.

Article XII. Recognition of Ordained Ministers

1. Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall establish and maintain a list of the CREC ministers (pastors) in their presbytery.
2. The purpose of the lists of CREC ministers is simply to clarify who is formally recognized as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel in the CREC. It does not mean that the man is a member of presbytery or council, or a delegate to presbytery or council. Removing a man’s credentials from such a register is not equivalent to defrocking, which can only be done in the CREC at the local church level.
3. The lists shall consist of the names of: (a) ordained pastors recorded in the church reports adopted by presbytery, (b) other ministerial changes that take place at presbytery, and (c) any changes of pastoral status registered in writing with the Presiding Minister between the annual presbytery meetings. To this end:
 - a) Each church shall provide a written report to presbytery at the appointed yearly meeting which includes the names of each of the ordained pastors, as well as any ordained pastor without call that is recognized by that church.

- b)** The Presiding Minister of presbytery shall automatically add or remove from the list of recognized ordained men those changes which take place at presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:

 - i.** a previously ordained man, who has had his ordination formally recognized by presbytery upon entering the CREC along with his church;
 - ii.** any church removed from the CREC will have the names of its ordained officers removed from the list.
- c)** A church shall register all changes of pastoral status between presbytery meetings with the Presiding Minister of presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:

 - i.** any man who sat for a CREC ordination exam and was recommended by the examination committee, ordained by his local CREC church, and installed as a minister;
 - ii.** any previously ordained man, who was called by a CREC member church to be her minister, and is duly installed;
 - iii.** any minister who was defrocked;
 - iv.** any minister without call who is a member of a local CREC church that the local church wants to recognize as a lawfully ordained minister.
- 4.** Ministers without call whose ordinations are maintained by the CREC must be members of a CREC church.

 - a)** A church, before receiving an ordained (but uninstalled) minister into membership, is under obligation to either approve or not approve the minister's credentials. The

normal expectation is that a church will approve of a minister's credentials.

- i. In the case that a minister's credentials are not approved the minister may:
 - (1) Pursue membership in another local church, or
 - (2) Submit to membership and so be released from his ministerial status by demitting (resigning) his office.
 - ii. If a minister's credentials are approved the local church must:
 - (1) Indicate the minister's status to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery
 - (2) Approve or not approve any ministerial activity (e.g., performing baptisms, marriages, publishing, etc.), and
 - (3) Take initiative in any proceedings of discipline leading to restoration or defrocking if the minister's doctrine or life is reproachable.
- b) If a CREC minister does not receive a call within three years of having his "minister without call" status first recognized, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the church that holds his credentials unless specific permission is requested by the church and received from presbytery. This permission must be sought and granted on an annual basis.
5. Ministers under the oversight of another church or presbytery who are without call and desire to become members of a CREC church while remaining concurrently under the

oversight of another body, must obtain approval by presbytery according the procedure of the Constitution II.B.

6. Ministers who are at least 50 years old and who have served in one or more CREC churches for at least 10 years are eligible to retire as a minister. The provisions of paragraph 4 apply to retired ministers, except that, once their retired status is reported and approved by presbytery via adoption, a failure to subsequently report and approve their retired status shall not result in a loss of their retired ministerial status. The provisions of subparagraph 4.b. do not apply to retired ministers.
7. Upon request, the Presiding Minister may issue a letter to an inquiring body stating that the minister in question has been formally recognized by the CREC as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel.

Article XIII. Formal, Non-Binding Fraternal Relations

The CREC welcomes and encourages warm fraternal relations with likeminded churches, presbyteries, and denominations. If a request for such a relationship comes to us from another body, the appropriate presiding minister will oversee the necessary discussions and submit the resultant proposal to presbytery or Council. That proposal requires a two-thirds vote to approve. If a broader assembly of the CREC seeks a similar relationship with another body, the presiding minister must receive permission from the majority of the appropriate broader assembly to approach that other body. If a proposal results, the final approval must be a two-thirds vote.

Article XIV. Miscellaneous Provisions

1. Emblem

The emblem below is the only one approved for use as graphic representation of the CREC. No other emblem may be used in this regard.



[Full branding guidelines and EPS files may be downloaded from <http://crechurches.org/resources/>]

2. Harmony of Books of Procedure

Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall submit to the Presiding Minister of Council, at least six months prior to the next regular Council meeting, a list of any changes to their Presbytery Book of Procedures to be presented for adoption and harmonization with the CREC Council Book of Procedures. These should include items that the presbyteries wish to see standardized for all presbyteries. Items peculiar to a particular presbytery do not need to be presented but may be maintained by that presbytery in its Book of Procedures, provided that such procedures are not in conflict with the Council Book of Procedures or the CREC Constitution and Bylaws. Once approved by the Presiding Minister of Council,

the proposed changes shall be presented in the form of motions for adoption at the next regular meeting of the Council. If a motion does not pass, it may be presented again to the delegates of Council for approval to be retained in that presbytery's Book of Procedures.

3. Translation of documents

CREC churches in non-English speaking countries may use dynamic equivalence in pastoral translations of CREC documents, materials and names.

4. Electronic Communications

The Presiding Minister of Council will maintain a confidential "list serve" restricted to members of a session for CREC member and mission churches. Those who violate the confidentiality of the list may be removed from the list at the discretion of the Presiding Minister of Council.

Appendix A

A Guide to the Rules of Order for Presbytery and Council Meetings

Moderator

The moderator guides the presbytery meeting. He is responsible for ensuring that the meeting runs smoothly and fairly. The moderator remains impartial during the debate and is not the final arbitrator of all decisions: the presbytery ultimately has the authority and the responsibility to decide how the meeting should run.

Main Motion

The basis for discussion is a formal motion. The motion is put forward by being “moved” by a voting delegate of the presbytery to focus discussion. Each motion must have a mover and a seconder to show that it has at least a minimum of support from the delegates. Once a motion has been put “on the floor” for discussion, debate must focus on the substance of the motion. All other discussion is out of order and not allowed. A main motion may not be introduced if there is any other motion on the floor. The mover must state the motion before speaking in favor of it and motions should (when possible) be written out and handed to the moderator so that everyone is clear on what is being discussed.

Order

Once a motion is introduced, the seconder of the motion is given the right to speak immediately after the mover. To ensure that all delegates of the presbytery have an equal opportunity to speak, the moderator will then recognize other speakers.

Amendments

At any time, a person who has the floor can introduce an amendment to the main motion being debated. An amendment is a motion that alters, adds to, subtracts from, or completely changes the main motion. Once an amendment has been moved and seconded, debate must be on the substance of the amendment. An amendment can only be amended once (that is to say, no amendment may be offered to an amendment of second rank; a motion or amendment may be amended continually as long as amendments are handled in turn or of first or second rank. Second rank amendments are amendments that explicitly modify a first rank amendment and not some other aspect of the main motion.). For an amendment to pass, it needs a simple majority. Once an amendment has either been passed, defeated, or withdrawn, discussion reverts back to the main motion, taking into account whether or not the amendment passed. Complex or lengthy amendments should be written out for the moderator to be able to read back to the presbytery.

Point of Order

If a delegate feels that the rules of order are being broken, he can immediately raise a “point of order,” and state what rule has been broken or not enforced by the moderator. A point of order can interrupt a speaker. It can only be used to ask the moderator to enforce the rules. The moderator decides if the point is valid or not, and proceeds accordingly

Point of Privilege

A point of privilege can interrupt a speaker. A delegate who feels his rights or privileges have been infringed may bring up this point by stating his problem. Privilege refers to anything regarding the

comfort or accessibility of the delegate (i.e., too much noise, bad photo copies, etc.), or to the right of the delegate not to be insulted, misquoted, or deliberately misinterpreted. The moderator decides if the point is valid or not and proceeds accordingly.

Challenge the Moderator

If a delegate feels his point of order or privilege has been ruled on unfairly by the moderator, he may challenge the moderator. The moderator then asks for a motion to uphold the moderator, and the vote is taken. The vote decides whether the action decided upon by the moderator is valid, or whether the delegate is correct. This is normally handled as an “Appeal”. Its form is, “Mr. Chairman, I appeal from the decision of the chair.” It requires a second, whereupon the chair states clearly the question at issue, and his reasons for the decision if he thinks it necessary, and then states the question thus: “The question is, ‘shall the decision of the chair stand as the judgment of the presbytery?’” or “Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?”

Point of Information

A point of information is a question. A delegate may interrupt the speaker to ask his question, but the speaker who has the floor has the privilege to refuse the question. The moderator will ask the speaker if he wishes to entertain a question at that time. A point of information is not an opportunity to bring forward information, or harass another speaker, or generally disrupt the proceedings. It can only be a question.

Table

Debate may end in several ways. If a delegate feels that a decision on a motion needs to be postponed for some reason, then

he can move to “table” the motion. A delegate may not move to table the motion at the end of a speech, only at the time they are recognized by the moderator. A specified time may be put on the tabling, or the motion may be left indefinite. The only debate allowed is as to the length of tabling, or the timeline involved. The motion to table requires only a simple majority.

Previous Question

If a delegate feels that further debate is unproductive he may make a motion for the “previous question,” requesting the debate be ended and that the vote be taken on the main motion(s) before the presbytery. If there is no objection, the meeting proceeds to the main motion(s). If there is objection then there must be a second to the motion for the previous question and the meeting must vote on whether to end debate. This vote requires a two-thirds majority to pass, and is non-debatable. If the “call” passes, a vote on the main motion is immediately taken, without any further debate.

A motion such as “I call for [or “call”] the question” or “I move we vote now” is simply a motion for the Previous Question made in nonstandard term. Care should be taken that failure to understand this fact does not lead to violation of members’ rights of debate. Sometimes the mere making of a motion for the Previous Question or “call for the question” may motivate unanimous consent to ending debate. Before or after such a motion has been seconded, the chair may ask if there is any objection to closing debate. If any member objects, he should ask if there is a second to the motion or call; or, if it has already been seconded, he must immediately take a vote on whether to order the Previous Question. But regardless of the wording a motion or

“call” seeking to close debate, it always requires a second and a two-thirds vote, taken separately from and before the vote(s) on the motion(s) to which it is applied, to shut off debate against the will of even one member who wishes to speak and has not exhausted his right to debate.

Given the foregoing, the Moderator will not consider an unrecognized comment of “Question” or “Call the Question” from members of the Presbytery as the equivalent of a formal motion to call the Previous Question (form, after receiving recognition from the chairman: “I move the Previous Question.”), particularly when other members of the Presbytery are obviously seeking to contribute to debate.

Rescind

A motion to rescind another motion is in order if it refers to a motion passed at another meeting on another day. This cannot be applied to actions that cannot be reversed (i.e., things that have already been carried out). This requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

Reconsider

A motion to reconsider is applicable to a motion that was passed at the same meeting. Such a motion must be moved by someone who voted with the prevailing majority on the previous vote. It requires a majority to pass.

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules of order (so that the presbytery may do something not allowed in the rules) must receive a two-thirds majority vote, is not debatable, cannot be amended and cannot be reconsidered at the same meeting. This motion does not allow for the suspension of a provision of the constitution or bylaws.

Adjourn

This motion takes precedence over all others, except to “fix the time to adjourn,” to which it yields. It must be seconded, it is not debatable, it cannot be amended, nor can a vote on it be reconsidered. A motion to adjourn cannot be made when another person has the floor, nor after a question has been put and the presbytery is engaged in voting. The motion to adjourn requires a majority vote.

Refer or Commit

This motion is generally used to send a pending question to a committee so that the question can be carefully investigated. This motion must be seconded and is debatable, but the debate can only extend to the desirability of committing the main motion, not to the substance or the main motion itself. The motion to refer requires a majority vote.

Minutes

The numbering of motions always is by date, and then by when the motion arose in the meeting (YEAR/MONTH/DAY: NUMBER IN ORDER). So the fourteenth motion during the October 13, 2004 meeting would be numbered like: 04/10/13:14.

The three numbers after either “CARRIED,” “DEFEATED,” or “TIED” are arranged in a specific order. The first number indicates the number that voted in favor; the second is the number voting against; the third is the number who abstained. Thus, a decision which saw seven delegates in favor, four against, and two abstaining, would look like: 7-4-2.

Appendix B

Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination

The character and situation of one who is preparing for the Sacred Office, are interesting beyond the power of language to express. Such an one, like the Master whom he professes to love and serve, is “set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.” In all that he is, and in all that he does, the temporal and eternal welfare not only of himself, but of thousands, may be involved. On every side he is beset with perils. Whatever may be his talents and learning, if he have not genuine piety, he will probably be a curse instead of a blessing to the Church. But this is not the only danger to which he is exposed. He may have unfeigned piety, as well as talents and learning; and yet, from habitual indiscretion; from a defect in that sobriety of mind, which is so precious to all men, but especially to everyone who occupies a public station; from a fondness for novelty and innovation, or from that love of distinction which is so natural to men; after all, instead of edifying the “body of Christ,” he may become a disturber of its peace, and a corrupter of its purity; so that we might almost say, whatever may be the result with respect to himself, “it had been good for the Church if he had never been born.”

Hence it is, that every part of the character of him who is coming forward to the holy ministry; his opinions; his temper; his attainments; his infirmities; and above all, his character as a practical Christian; are of inestimable importance to the ecclesiastical community of which he is destined to be a minister. Nothing that pertains to him is uninteresting. If it were possible for him, strictly speaking, to “live to himself,” or to “die to himself,” the case would be different. But it is not possible. His defects as well as his excellencies; his gifts

and graces, as well as the weak points of his character, must and will all have their appropriate effect on everything that he touches.

Samuel Miller. D. D., *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions* (Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia: 1839) [reprinted by A Press, Greenville, South Carolina: 1991.]

Section 1: The Nature of Ordination

Ordination for those to be Recognized as Pastors in the CREC

What is ordination? The ordination of a minister (pastor or teaching elder) is the act of conferring and confirming ministerial gifts (1 Tim. 4:14). It implies qualifications and competencies (1 Tim. 3:1–7, Eph. 4:11). The pattern established in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:1–2) is that Timothy was to commit the things he had learned to those faithful men who would be able to teach others. When elders were established in every city, they would perpetuate the process of succession (Titus 1). This task clearly requires that a determination be made as to whether a man is characterized by a faithful life and whether he is skilled in teaching others.

The Purpose of the Examination Process

The examination process is designed to evaluate the ministerial competence of the candidate. Given the responsibilities an ordained man will assume for the flock of God and the authority that will be conferred upon him, it is essential for us to have substantial knowledge or assurance of these four things before he is ordained to the office:

1. Who the man is (character)
2. What the man knows (knowledge)
3. What the man believes (understanding)
4. What the man will do (wisdom)

The overseer of God's flock must possess the necessary character and skills along with the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in the Scriptures in order to adequately fulfill his calling. He must be able to feed Christ's sheep (John 21:15–17; 1 Pet. 5:1–4); convict those who oppose the faith (2 Tim. 2:24–26); and make a good confession before men (1 Tim. 6:12).

The ordination examination process is designed to be demanding. It will take a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of the candidate. Nevertheless, when a candidate has passed the examination, the *value* of the ordination is increased for everyone involved. When a man is examined and approved by the broader church, several benefits flow from that process that will better equip him for his public life of service to Christ and His Church.

The ordination process seeks to protect the Church by holding back those who are not called or who are not yet ready for the important work of overseeing God's people. When the Presbytery approves a man, it inspires confidence in the candidate, in the local church, in the broader church, and in those outside the Church. It is prudent for the session of a local church to seek the accountability of the Presbytery as a protection to the flock, and it is a good testimony when they do so. Ultimately, the session is charged with faithfully considering the wisdom of the Presbytery and is responsible before God for the ordination of a candidate.

The Roles of the Presbytery and the Local Church Session

The purposes in the ordination examination process are twofold: we must examine, first, a teaching elder candidate's manner of life and doctrine and, second, his ability to teach scripturally, along with his ability to provide wise pastoral care. The local session carries the primary burden of this critical determination, and the

Presbytery's role is to assist them in the process. The Presbytery works with the local church and session of the candidate to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's readiness for office. The Presbytery recommends that the local church session establish a process for the formal evaluation of the candidate in light of the biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These areas should cover:

1. His knowledge of the Bible and theology;
2. His family life, including his marriage relationship, child-rearing and personal finances;
3. His interpersonal relationships with those inside the church (not a brawler, ability to work with others, ability to resolve conflicts, etc.);
4. His reputation outside the local church, both with other churches and with those outside the church;
5. His maturity and wisdom (not a novice);
6. His ministerial gifts (i.e., pastoral and teaching).

The Candidate for Ordination

The candidate should see the examination process as *the time* for him to put his best foot forward theologically. Both for the glory of God (whose truth he is privileged to represent) and for the assuring of the church (to which he promises to minister), anyone who wishes to undertake the consecrated office of elder-teacher should aim to display the best understanding of the system of biblical doctrine that he can.

The Presbytery will be interested in evaluating the candidate's effort in terms of:

1. Knowledge of the Bible
2. Theological understanding

3. Historical perception
4. Christian orthodoxy

Section 2: Pastoral Internship

Prior to the candidate's oral examination, he must serve in a pastoral internship/mentorship. The internship/mentorship should be under the oversight of a pastor, who will serve as the candidate's mentor, and should last at least one year. The pastor should regularly meet with the candidate to discuss the various facets of a pastor's responsibilities and to pray. The pastor should include the candidate in as much of his pastoral work as is feasible. Specifically, the internship/mentorship should include:

1. Directed reading and study.
2. Preaching and teaching on a regular basis.
3. Involvement in regular pastoral work (e.g., assisting the pastor in counseling, hospital visitation, etc.). Ideally, the internship should include involvement in pre-marital and marital counseling.
4. Involvement in liturgical leadership (e.g., public reading of Scripture, public prayer, etc.).
5. Involvement in diaconal work, especially mercy ministry.
6. Attendance at both session and diaconal meetings. Attendance at presbytery and council is also desirable.
7. Assisting the pastor in preparing weekly liturgies, weddings and funerals.
8. Assisting the pastor in various administrative duties.
9. Regular feedback from the pastor on the candidate's progress, areas of needed growth, etc. It is vital for the candidate to receive honest feedback concerning his gifts, character and overall fitness for ministry.

The requirement for this pastoral internship/mentorship or particular elements listed here may be set aside or modified at the discretion of the Ordination Examination Committee in consultation with the local session, or it may be satisfied by ministry experience that is considered its equivalent.

Section 3: The Ordination Examination Process

The examination process is divided into three phases:

1. Preliminary interview by a Committee of Presbytery appointed by the Presiding Minister of Presbytery.
2. A written examination and two exegesis papers overseen by the Ordination Examination Committee.
3. An oral examination administered on the floor of Presbytery, led by the Ordination Examination Committee.

Phase One: The Preliminary Interview

1. After the local session of elders is confident of the proper qualifications of the candidate, they are to make a written request to the Presiding Minister of the Presbytery to begin the process of ordination. This will ordinarily take place no later than four months before a stated meeting of presbytery.
2. The Presiding Minister will appoint a five member Ordination Examination Committee for the candidate. Each member will ordinarily be from a separate session. The session putting forth the teaching elder candidate is allowed only one seat on the Ordination Examination Committee. In extraordinary circumstances, Ordination Examination Committee members may be chosen from outside the candidate's presbytery. This Ordination

Examination Committee will oversee the Presbytery examination process, and a chairman will be chosen by the Committee. In coordination with the local church, the Committee will set a date for the Preliminary Interview.

3. Preliminary interview: The Ordination Examination Committee will use this interview to evaluate the candidate's educational experience, including any college or seminary transcripts or other relevant training or expertise. The Committee will report back to the candidate and his local session with a formal recommendation of a candidate's readiness to proceed in the examination process. A candidate that receives a positive recommendation will also receive recommendations for preparation for the written and oral exams. The Preliminary Interview will ordinarily take place no later than three months before a stated meeting of Presbytery.

Phase Two: The Written Examination and Exegesis Papers

Process and Guidelines

1. Upon completion of the Preliminary Interview and positive recommendation to proceed in the examination process, the Written Ordination Examination is to be prepared and administered under the direction of the Chairman of the Ordination Examination Committee, in coordination with the local elders. The local session may add questions to the written examination but may not remove any of the standard, approved questions (see Section 5). The examination, with the exception of the Pastoral Case Studies, is to be completed within twelve hours, with as many breaks as needed and may be

completed over the course of no more than three days. The exam is ordinarily to be proctored by a member of the candidate's local session, and the candidate may only use a Bible for this portion of the examination. The pastoral case studies do not require a proctor, are "open book," and are to be completed outside the twelve hour time limit. The chairman of the Ordination Examination Committee will give the candidate a reasonable due date for the completion of the entire examination.

2. The components of the Written Examination.
 - a) The candidate shall write a brief historical and theological summary of 10 books of the Bible (to be selected by the chairman of the Committee).
 - b) The candidate shall write brief answers to the Ordination Questions (*see Section 5*).
 - c) The candidate shall write brief but thorough answers (1–2 pages) to the five pastoral case studies
3. Guidelines for Exegesis Papers
 - a) Demonstrate the candidate is "apt to teach" (1 Tim 3:2) and capable of "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).
 - b) Demonstrate the candidate can present his knowledge of the texts in a coherent, rhetorically attractive fashion.
 - c) Demonstrate the candidate has an adequate ability to interpret and explain biblical texts by analyzing them grammatically, historically, canonically, theologically, Christocentrically, and literarily.

- d) Demonstrate the candidate is capable of interacting with biblical texts in their original languages. The papers should include the candidate's own annotated translation of his chosen texts, including appropriate lexical and syntactical analysis. The candidate can use scholarly tools to assist in translation work, but must show proficiency with the languages. The Presbytery and/or Ordination Examination Committee may waive or modify the language requirement for a candidate in extenuating circumstances.
- e) Demonstrate the candidate can interact with opposing theological viewpoints in a gracious but firm manner.
- f) Demonstrate the candidate can integrate the fruits of his exegesis into biblical and systematic theology.
- g) Demonstrate the candidate can apply the fruits of his exegesis to the life of the church in a wise, pastoral fashion.
- h) Demonstrate the candidate has an adequate awareness of available resources by including full bibliographies and appropriate citations.

Phase 3: The Oral Examination

Process and Guidelines

1. The candidate shall provide the Ordination Examination Committee the following documents at least sixty days prior to the Oral Examination which will ordinarily take place during the days of Presbytery.
 - a) A written biographical statement explaining his Christian experience, including an explanation

- of his aspiration to the ministry, and confessional views (including exceptions to his confession);
- b) The exegesis papers;
 - c) Two recorded sermons (in audio format) with written outlines if available: one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament;
 - d) The completed Written Examination.
2. When the Ordination Examination Committee reaches a point of confidence that the candidate is well prepared for the Oral Examination, the Chairman of the Ordination Examination Committee will notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery and request that the Oral Examination be placed on the agenda for the presbytery meeting. This will take place at least thirty days before presbytery and a public notice will be sent out to the CREC Elder Email List. The Oral Examination will be open to all in attendance at presbytery (including visiting and fraternal delegations).
 3. The Committee members will examine the candidate within the allotted time, at the discretion of the Committee chairman. The Committee will use the written work submitted as a foundation for questioning for clarification, assessing weaknesses and strengths, and probing the depths of the candidate's knowledge and ministerial competence. The Sample Questions for Oral Examination (*see Section 5*) are also offered as examples of the sorts of questions that may be helpful to the Committee and/or other Presbyters present. As part of the oral exam, the Committee will allow time after their examination for presbyters to ask questions of the candidate.

4. At the end of the Oral Examination, the Presbytery moves into executive session, with the candidate present, for deliberation. Following deliberation, the Presbytery, by majority vote, will recommend or not recommend the candidate for ordination. Following the decision, the Committee will write a report of the decision of Presbytery along with any other recommendations for the candidate to be delivered to the candidate and his home session.
5. If the Presbytery does not recommend ordination at this time, and the session determines to proceed with ordination against the recommendation of the Presbytery, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister the reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3 of the Constitution.

Overview: Schedule for an Ordination Process

The schedule requirement for this process may be modified by the Presiding Minister. Ordinarily, churches should comply with the following:

1. Churches must request an examination for a candidate no later than four months prior to a Presbytery meeting.
2. Phase One of the examination process must be completed by the candidate no later than three months prior to the Presbytery meeting.
3. Phase Two of the examination process must be completed no later than two months prior to the Presbytery meeting.

4. A public notice of any candidate's examination should be posted to the CREC Elder Email list at least thirty days prior to his oral examination.
5. Under extenuating circumstances, exceptions to this schedule may be requested of the Presiding Minister of Presbytery.

Section 4: Ordination Transfer and "Ruling Elder" Ordination

Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

We live in days when irregularity in every aspect of church life is prevalent. The Presbytery seeks to bring regularity and order to the Church. While we believe in the holy catholic Church and therefore accept the ordination of ministers outside of the CREC, it is both wise and proper for their credentials to be examined. It is recommended, though not obligatory, that CREC churches seek the wisdom of the broader church in assessing these credentials. Therefore, the following process is recommended.

Assessing the credentials and views of an ordained minister is not the same process as an ordination examination and is not to be as comprehensive. The aim in examining a transferring minister is to assist the local congregation in confirming orthodoxy and competence.

1. When a CREC church desires to call as a pastor one who was ordained outside of the CREC or who is not a minister in the CREC, the session of the church shall inform the Presiding Minister of Presbytery.
2. The Presiding Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination in the following manner: A Credentials Committee composed of three CREC presbyters will

be appointed by the Presiding Minister to examine the ordained man's credentials and confirm his orthodoxy. This may take place at a time determined by the Presiding Minister, in coordination with the local church elders.

3. The Committee will inquire concerning the minister's experience, training, ordination, and doctrinal views. This may be accomplished through a variety of means, including correspondence, telephonically, and through electronic mail, etc. The Committee will, by majority vote, recommend or not recommend the calling of the minister to the local church.
4. The Committee will provide a report of its decision and any other recommendations to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the Committee recommends the call of the minister, the church may proceed with the call. At the next Presbytery, the minister will then be received into the CREC as an ordained minister with a report from the Committee and an opportunity for a brief examination on the floor of Presbytery. If the session determines to proceed with the call against the recommendation of the Committee, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister the reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to determine if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3 of the Constitution.

Ordination of Elders not Recognized in the CREC as Pastors

The CREC, in a desire to assist local congregations, makes the following recommendations for their own examination of

candidates for elder who are not recognized by the CREC as pastors or ministers. These are often called “ruling elders.”

1. The Presbytery is not involved in the process of examination or ordination for a “ruling elder.” Nevertheless, since all elders are required to perform the same primary function of ruling and overseeing the church as do pastors, a similar standard of Biblical and doctrinal knowledge should be encouraged.
2. The CREC guidelines and examinations contained in this appendix are useful tools to assist those seeking to become elders.
3. These may be used in an “open book” examination.
4. It is not expected that elders who are not pastors will have the same competence in Biblical languages.

Section 5: Examination Questions

Phase 2 Written Examination

The local session may add questions to the written examination but may not remove any of the standard, approved questions set forth below. The examination, with the exception of the Pastoral Case Studies, is to be completed within twelve hours, with as many breaks as needed and may be completed over the course of no more than three days. The exam is ordinarily to be proctored by a member of the candidate’s local session, and the candidate may only use a Bible for this portion of the examination. The Pastoral Case Studies do not require a proctor, are “open book,” and are to be completed outside the twelve hour time limit. The chairman of the Ordination Examination Committee will give the candidate a reasonable due date for the completion of the entire examination.

Personal

1. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Do you live in a manner consistent with this profession?
3. Is there anything in the pattern of your life which this body needs to know in order to prevent scandal in the Church?
4. Do you believe that you meet the biblical qualifications with regard to the personal character and ability of a pastor (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–4)?
5. Do you love people?
6. According to the Bible, service comes before authority. What are some ways in which you are already demonstrating a commitment to service?
7. What is the condition of your marriage?
8. Does your wife support you in your desire to serve as a pastor?
9. What is the condition of your household? Are your children faithful?
10. What is your understanding of the covenant household and the varying roles of husband, wife, and children?
11. What is your approach to the training and education of our children in the Lord?
12. What do you believe concerning Christian education for your children and why?
13. What is your educational background?
14. Describe your relationship with your parents, and particularly with your father.
15. Describe and explain your practices with regard to personal and family worship.

Bible

16. What translation of the Bible do you use? Why?
17. Which text or text tradition do you follow? Why?
18. Do you hold to the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*? How do you understand that doctrine? Explain and defend a Protestant doctrine of church tradition which is consistent with *sola Scriptura*.
19. What is the difference between infallibility and inerrancy?
20. What is the canon of Scripture?
21. Which books do you believe are canonical? What is it that makes these books canonical and gives them their authority?
22. How would you refute a denial of scriptural authority?
23. Explain and defend your basic hermeneutical approach to the text?
24. Briefly describe your exegetical methodology.

The candidate shall write brief summaries of ten books of the Bible, to be chosen by the chairman of the Ordination Committee, focusing on structure, history, theology, and major themes/typology/symbolism. The books will include at least one from each of the following: Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets, Gospels & Acts, and Epistles.

Theology

25. What is apologetics? What is its importance to a minister of the Word?
26. What is the difference between presuppositionalism and evidentialism in apologetics?

27. Define and defend the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture. Include a defense of the full deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.
28. What is the difference between God's communicable and incommunicable attributes? Provide examples of each.
29. What is meant by the economical Trinity and the ontological Trinity?
30. What is the difference between the *opera ad extra* and the *opera ad intra*?
31. What is the nature and importance of the Creator/creature distinction?
32. What is your view of the historicity, chronology, and length of the six days of creation in Genesis 1? What is the importance of the view you are presenting?
33. What does it mean that man was created "in the image and likeness of God"?
34. Compare and contrast the covenant of creation before the Fall and the covenant of grace afterwards.
35. Discuss the history of God's covenant(s) as it is revealed in Scripture.
36. What are some practical implications of covenant theology?
37. Discuss the effects of man's fall into sin upon man himself and upon the rest of creation, with particular attention to original sin and to the extent of man's corruption.
38. What does Scripture teach concerning God's election? How is election good news?

39. How would you defend the doctrine of the full deity and humanity of Christ from Scripture? What is the hypostatic union?
40. Discuss and explain the offices of priest, king, and prophet, particularly with reference to Christ.
41. What does Scripture teach concerning the value, sufficiency, efficacy, and extent of application of the atonement?
42. What does Scripture teach concerning the efficacy of God's work in calling and drawing sinners to Christ for salvation?
43. What is justification and why is it a comfort? Discuss the doctrine of justification by faith alone.
44. What is sanctification? Discuss and distinguish definitive sanctification and progressive sanctification.
45. What is glorification? Discuss and distinguish present glorification and future glorification.
46. What does Scripture teach concerning the preservation and perseverance of the saints?
47. Discuss the nature and purpose of the church. What does it mean to confess "one holy, catholic, and apostolic church"?
48. What is your view of church government? Include both your view of local church government and your view of broader/higher assemblies, councils, etc. Provide Scriptural support for your view.
49. How many offices are there in the church? Do you hold to an official distinction between the offices of minister and of ruling elder? Why or why not?
50. Are women qualified to hold office in the church? Why or why not?

51. How should the worship of the church be regulated?
52. Describe the sort of liturgy that you think fits best with scriptural teaching and provide some scriptural warrant for its various elements.
53. What is a sacrament? How many sacraments are there? What are they?
54. What happens to a person who is baptized?
55. Explain and defend your position on the baptism of infants.
56. Explain and defend your position on the mode of baptism.
57. What happens when the church partakes of the Lord's Supper?
58. Explain and defend your positions on admission to, frequency of, and elements in the Lord's Supper.
59. Discuss the nature, purpose, and practice of church discipline. For what sin(s) should a church put someone under discipline?
60. What does Scripture teach concerning prayer?
61. What is your understanding of the function of spiritual gifts in the church? Do the revelatory or sign gifts given by the Spirit in the first century church continue in the church today? Explain your view.
62. Briefly summarize what Scripture teaches concerning heaven and hell.
63. What happens to a believer when he dies?
64. What is your view of eschatology? Briefly describe your expectations for the future of the gospel and the church in the world.

65. Do you believe in a literal return of Jesus in the future, together with a literal physical resurrection of the body, and that at that time He will judge the living and the dead?

Ethics

66. What is the foundation of Christian ethics?
67. What is the relationship between Christian ethics and the Mosaic Law? How do you use the Old Testament in ethics?
68. What are some ways in which Scripture functions in ethics?
69. What is the relationship between law and grace?
70. Briefly discuss each of the Ten Commandments with some indication of their application for Christian ethics.
71. Discuss abortion in the light of Scripture.
72. Discuss capital punishment in the light of Scripture.
73. What is your understanding of Scripture's teaching concerning divorce and remarriage?
74. Discuss homosexuality in the light of Scripture.
75. Discuss war in the light of Scripture.
76. What is the Christian's calling with regard to cultural involvement?
77. What is the Christian's calling with regard to the poor and oppressed?
78. What is your understanding of Christian liberty?

Church History

The candidate shall write brief treatments of ten particularly significant persons/events (to be chosen by the chairman of the Ordination Committee) from the whole range of church history,

including two from each of these periods: Early, Medieval, Reformation, and Modern. Include some indication of their importance for the church's life and doctrine.

Credo/Confessions/Memorials/Polity

79. What is the importance and value of creeds and confessions?
80. Do you affirm the Apostles' Creed without any reservations? Any exceptions?
81. Do you affirm the Nicene Creed without any reservations? Any exceptions?
82. Do you affirm the Definition of Chalcedon without any reservations? Any exceptions?
83. To which Reformation confession(s) do you subscribe? Any exceptions?
84. What is your position on the various CREC memorials?
85. Are you willing to abide by the CREC Constitution?

Pastoral

86. What are the pastor's primary calling and duties? Describe your philosophy of or intended approach to pastoral ministry.
87. What is the pastor's calling with regard to the liturgy?
88. Discuss the nature and importance of preaching. What are your primary goals in preaching?
89. What is your approach to pastoral counseling?
90. What is your understanding of pastoral confidentiality?
91. What safeguards do you believe should be in place when counseling women?

92. What is your understanding of the pastor's role with regard to church music? What kind of music do you think is appropriate for the liturgy? What is your level of musical competence?
93. What is your view of the working relationship between a minister and the elders?
94. How do you plan to make time for the demands of the office as well as for your household?
95. How much time do you plan to reserve for study?
96. Do you plan to wear clerical garb (e.g., a collar during the week; a robe in the liturgy)? Why or why not?

Pastoral Case Studies

The candidate shall write brief but thorough responses (1–2 pages) to five case studies dealing with practical pastoral theory/skills (to be prepared by the Chairman of the Ordination Committee).

Sample Questions for the Oral Examination

There are several purposes for ordination exams, including testing to see the orthodoxy of the candidate and testing to see the limits of the candidate's knowledge. But one important goal is to see how the candidate works with his knowledge, and for that a series of questions that lead to pat answers or quotations from catechisms or confessions is not sufficient. Nor is it sufficient to ask the candidate about Bible trivia or to limit theological questions to requests for definitions of terms.

One suggestion would be to use questions similar to those in the Heidelberg Catechism, which focus not on definitions but on comfort: "What is your only comfort in life and death?" "What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?" and so forth.

The following questions are not intended to be assigned as a whole to the candidate, as if they could function as a comprehensive examination. Rather, they are intended as examples of the kinds of questions that could move a candidate to deeper thought about the teachings of Scripture and about his theological views, as well as enable him to show his pastoral aptitudes and abilities as he formulates his answers.

Because these questions are intended to be more challenging, they might be most useful if they were given to the candidate in advance, with the candidate free to discuss them with others and research his answers — in short, they would work best with a fully *open book* format.

Bible

1. What are at least three major themes in the Bible?
2. Trace the theme of _____ in the Bible (e.g., water, mountains, seed/fruit, trees, the number 7, music, marriage, sheep and shepherds, etc.).
3. Trace the theme of priests, kings, prophets in Scripture.
4. Discuss the terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” How are these terms useful and how are they problematic?
5. A friend tells you that there’s a page in your Bible that is not inspired. It’s the Table of Contents. He says that means the church made the Bible and decided which books would be authoritative. How would you respond?
6. A visitor to your church hears you talking in your sermon about how something in the Old Testament points forward to Christ. Afterward, he speaks to you about it:

“You can’t say that’s a type of Christ. The only things we can identify as types are the ones the apostles identify as types, and they don’t say anything like what you said.” How would you respond?

7. A biblical scholar claims that we cannot follow the exegetical and hermeneutical approach of the authors of the New Testament (e.g., typology). How would you respond?
8. A biblical scholar claims that the Bible is the product of people living at a particular time with a particular worldview and thinking in particular categories that are very different from ours. He says that we need to distinguish between the kernel and the husk in Scripture, keeping the ideas while discarding the things that were simply a product of the authors’ culture or setting. How would you respond?

Theology

9. An atheist friend confronts you with the classical problem of evil: “If God is good and all powerful, why do bad things happen? If He’s all-powerful, He could stop them from happening. If He’s good, He wouldn’t want them to happen. So either He’s good but not all-powerful, or He’s all-powerful but not good, or He’s neither all-powerful nor good.” How would you respond?
10. After a Sunday School class discussion of the Trinity, one of your members comes up to you and says, “I’ve always found that stuff about the Trinity so confusing. I guess that’s what the Bible teaches. But what does that have to do with my life? What practical relevance does the doctrine of the Trinity have?” How would you respond?

11. Compare and contrast Unitarian systems (e.g., Unitarianism, Islam) with Trinitarianism.
12. A theological book that you are reading speaks of the Tree of Life as if it was off limits to Adam until Adam passed a probation in the Garden. Evaluate this idea.
13. Why did God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden? Discuss with reference to the significance of that tree for us today.
14. A member of your church wonders why you never pray specifically for God to bless Israel. After all, he says, God told Abraham that whoever blessed Israel would be blessed. “You don’t hold to Replacement Theology, do you?” he asks. How would you respond?
15. A member of your church approaches you about the possibility of you leading a trip to the Holy Land. “Just imagine,” he says, “We could walk where Jesus walked. It would make our faith come to life.” How would you respond?
16. Why couldn’t God the Son have been incarnated as, say, a Chinese boy living in the sixth century AD or as an American boy living this year? Why did He have to be a Jew living in the first century?
17. If it is through Jesus’ death and resurrection that we are saved, why did Jesus have to live for over thirty years first? What was the importance of his teaching, healings, exorcisms?
18. You get into a discussion with a fellow pastor in your community. He’s surprised to hear that you believe in a substitutionary atonement. “God doesn’t demand that Jesus die under His wrath in our place,” he says, “That’s cosmic child abuse. Besides, if God wants to forgive us,

He can just forgive us. He doesn't need to kill Jesus to do that." How would you respond?

19. You are speaking about Jesus' suffering and death to a man you met while street witnessing. After listening for a while, he says, "Here's my problem: I don't understand how the death of some Jewish guy a long time ago could make me right with God." How would you help him?
20. A theologian explains the relationship between Jesus' two natures this way: "When Jesus was on the cross, His human nature suffered, but His divine nature looked on, unperturbed, like the peaceful moon above a troubled sea." How would you respond?
21. A friend attends one of your services and then complains, "Your church mustn't even believe in the Holy Spirit. It doesn't look anything like the early church in Acts 2!" How would you respond?
22. You are trying to rent a building for your church plant. The building owner is a Christian, but he says to you, "Are you a Calvinist? Calvinists don't believe in free will; they think people are just like robots." How would you respond?
23. After you preach a sermon in which you talk about God's sovereign election, a member of your church comes up to you, visibly troubled. "Every time I hear about election, it scares me. If God chose me, He chose me. If He didn't, He didn't. There's nothing I can do about it. But I don't know if I'm elect or not. How can I tell?" she asks. How would you comfort her?
24. A pastor says to you, "We don't know who in the congregation is elect and who isn't. So we can't simply call everyone

'brothers' or tell them indiscriminately that Jesus died for them. We need discriminatory preaching. We need to preach to the various categories in the church: to the elect who have come to faith, to the elect who haven't come to faith yet, to those who have just been awakened to a sense of their guilt, to the hardened unbeliever, and so on." How would you evaluate this view of the relationship between election and your pastoral approach to the congregation?

25. After a sermon in which you spoke about the danger of apostasy, a visitor approaches you, visibly troubled. "Are you saying that we can lose our salvation?" he asks. "I thought you held to the perseverance of the saints?" How would you respond?
26. You finally track down a member of your congregation who has left his wife to move in with another woman. When you warn him that if he continues in his sin and refuses to repent he will end up in hell, he looks at you in amazement. "But, Pastor," he says, "I thought you believed in the perseverance of the saints!" How would you respond?
27. "The problem with the doctrine of justification by faith alone," says a friend of yours, "is that it makes things too easy. People say they believe in Jesus and then they go off and live as sinfully as they please." How would you respond?
28. You are reading a book on sanctification. An author in the book says that sanctification is simply getting used to being justified by faith alone. If you talk about good works or about our own efforts in connection with sanctification, you're back to works salvation again. How would you respond?

29. Some members of your church come from a Quaker background. They are now convinced from Scripture that baptism and the Lord's Supper are required. But they want to understand why the church has sacraments. How would you answer them?
30. A member of your church approaches you on Sunday about the status of his baptism. "I think I need to be baptized again," he says. "I'm quite sure that when I was baptized as an infant, my parents were unbelievers." After asking some more questions, you learn that he was baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a Lutheran church of which his parents were members. Your parishioner insists that his parents' subsequent departure from the church and their present-day confession of unbelief is evidence that his baptism was invalid. What will you say and do?
31. After hearing a Sunday School lesson on baptism taught by you, a couple approaches you for advice. "Before joining your church," they say, "we were members of a Methodist church. Our children were all baptized by a woman minister. Do they need to be re-baptized?" What would you say to them?
32. After observing a baptism in your church, a new couple approaches you. They used to be members of a liberal United Church of Christ and their children were baptized with a different baptismal formula. They were baptized in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier and not Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Do they need to be (re)baptized now? What would you say to them?

33. A new couple in your church asks about the possibility of “dedicating” their new baby instead of baptizing him with water. What would you say or do?
34. A visitor who has recently trusted in Christ wants to join the church, and he wants you to baptize him by immersion. He argues that the Greek word for *baptize* means “immerse,” and he has even heard you teach that those who have been baptized by immersion are truly baptized. “If the validity of baptism doesn’t depend on the mode, why can’t I be baptized by immersion?” he asks. “What harm would it do?” What will you say and do?
35. When the bread and wine are being distributed, some ministers hold out the bread and say, “The body of Christ given for you. Take and eat.” They speak similarly with the wine. But others say, “The body of Christ *has been* given for you. Take and eat.” They speak similarly with the wine. Which do you think is correct or best? What difference does it make?
36. One of the elders on your Session suggests that, as a change of pace, the church should celebrate the Lord’s Supper at the beginning of the service instead of at the end. How would you respond? How might you use the historic Reformed liturgies in your response?
37. A visitor notices that after the service some of the children find the leftover Lord’s Supper bread in the kitchen and eat it. She is very uncomfortable with this. How would you respond? In your answer, explain some different views of the real presence.
38. An elder on your Session suggests that it would be nice for everyone to come forward to receive the Lord’s

Supper. To facilitate the distribution, he recommends that four people stand behind the Table and give the bread and wine to four lines of people who come forward. Each time a communicant approaches the Table, he would be given the bread and wine with the words, “The body and blood of Christ given to you. Take, eat, and drink.” One of the elders thinks that at least one of the people distributing the elements ought to be a woman. What direction will you give the Session on this? What do you think about the overall proposal and the specific recommendation about a female distributor?

39. A regular visitor to your church comes to you before the service and asks if it is appropriate for her to take communion. She says that she believes in Jesus but has never been baptized. What will you say to her? Defend your position.
40. A member of your congregation visits another congregation on vacation and comes back excited about how that congregation practices the Lord’s Supper. “They dip the bread into the wine and then eat the wine-soaked bread,” he says. He suggests that your church adopt that practice, too. “It would even allow us to use a common cup,” he says. “We wouldn’t be drinking from the cup. No one’s lips would touch the cup. But we’d all get wine from the same cup.” How would you respond?
41. You are discussing the wedding ceremony with a couple in your premarital counseling class. They say to you, “We were at a wedding where the couple had the Lord’s Supper together right after they took their vows and exchanged their rings. It was such a beautiful picture of

their unity. We'd like to do that at our wedding, too."
How would you respond?

42. When Paul writes to the congregation, he says things like, "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess 2:13–14). While the nouns and verbs in this passage could enable you to preach about thanksgiving, the Lord's love, God's election, the Spirit's work of sanctification, and so forth, how would you handle the *pronouns* Paul uses in your sermon?
43. Your church excommunicates Bob, an unrepentant member. Afterwards, you notice that another family is no longer attending. When you visit them, they let you know their reason: "Excommunication is too harsh. You act as if Bob is going to hell now! You don't know that, and your whole behavior is so unloving. We can't attend a church like that." How would you respond?
44. After a Sunday School class on eschatology, a member approaches you, chuckling. "Well," he says, "you've got your view and other people have theirs, but I don't see that it really matters. Me? I'm a pan-millennialist. I think it's all going to pan out in the end." How might you respond? What difference does it make what you believe about eschatology?
45. Someone says to you, "If God already knows what you need and if all things work out according to His plan (Eph 1:14), then why pray?" How would you respond?

Ethics/Pastoral

46. A member of your church approaches you. He tells you that he's deeply bothered by the way that another member's wife dresses. "Pastor," he says, "you've got to talk to her about her immodesty. Or at least talk to her husband. She's causing people to stumble." How would you respond?
47. You receive a phone call from a member of your church. He sounds very disturbed as he tells you that he has just discovered somehow that another member is involved in some sexual sin. "Pastor," he says, "you need to go and talk to him about it." How would you respond?
48. An elder's 19 year old daughter turns out to be pregnant, to the shock of everyone, especially her father. She confesses to a sexual relationship with her clandestine boyfriend, an unbeliever that nobody else knows. She is ashamed and confesses her sin. What should happen next?
49. A church member wants to set out pro-life pamphlets on the back table at church and wants the elders to encourage members to take them in bulk and pass them around. The pamphlets have graphic pictures of fetuses being dismembered. What do you recommend?
50. A church member approaches you before a service. He would like to place a politically-related petition at the back of the church so that all the church members can sign it. How would you respond to his request?

Appendix C

A “Golden Rule” for Cooperation among Churches

I. Scriptural Basis

“Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:3–6).

“For just as we have many members in one body and all members do not have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:4,5).

Also see John 17:21; I Cor. 1:10–13, 12:1ff; Matt. 5:9; Rom. 14:19.

II. Principal Concerns

1. That we promote the unity, peace and purity of churches in the matter of their mutual involvement in the movement of members.
2. That we develop greater knowledge of, respect for and communication with these congregations and denominations in the area of their ecclesiastical discipline.
3. That we, while promoting goodwill between the churches, seek also to promote the growth and maturity of the persons involved through the positive application of church discipline.
4. That we signify our desire to discipline members by not ignoring another church’s discipline, and that we believe that the judgment of officers in Christ’s church may not

be disregarded as though they were not acting for God in His church.

5. That we demonstrate to all that the church of Christ is one, and that He has one law for all its parts.
6. That churches have occasionally, while perhaps unintentionally, received members and/or ordained officers who were under various stages of discipline in other churches, thus creating misunderstanding and tension between the churches.
7. That we recognize the need for mutual freedom and openness on the part of the churches.

III. The “Golden Rule” for Church Cooperation

THEREFORE, out of concern to build the Church of Jesus Christ we recommend that each local church respect the other’s procedures of discipline and pastoral concerns by affirming and applying the following courteous code of behavior as a guide for our churches in receiving members from other churches:

1. We will be sensitive to the presence of existing churches and missions ministries of other churches and will take great care in receiving members of those existing ministries.
2. We will refrain from receiving into membership a member of another local church until we have made a good faith effort to contact the officers of the former church.
3. We shall inform churches that are being attended by those under our discipline of the nature and extent of the disciplinary procedure, thus enabling informal consultation between the pastors and/or elders of both churches.
4. We shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under disciplinary action from his former church

until we have taken into serious account the discipline of and the information supplied by the former church.

5. We shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under discipline until the officers of his former church have been contacted to determine if any needed and proper restitution has been made or committed to and/or reconciliation has been seriously attempted. We shall make a good faith effort in such cases to satisfy the officers of the former church.
6. As appropriate, we shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under discipline until after he has made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the form of government of the church from which he is separating, and we shall be responsible to see that this is done.
7. We agree that when communication and/or action regarding the movement of a member or ordained officer from one church to another does not satisfy either his former or present church officers, other local pastors or elders may be contacted, with a view to mediation of the problem.

This document is based upon the "Golden Rule Comity Agreement" drafted and adopted by the National Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (NAPARC), as well as recommendations based upon NAPARC's agreement that were adopted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) at its 53rd General Assembly, held in 1986. We are deeply grateful to both NAPARC and the OPC for their fine work, and pray that our adaptation of their work meets with their approval and the approval of Christ's church.

