

APPENDIX C

Report from the Committee on Ordination Procedures

Committee Members: Rev. John Barach, Rev. Rich Lusk, Rev. Toby Sumpter, Rev. Dennis Tuuri (Chair)

Committee Charge: Redraft BOP Article XI, and the "Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters" Ordination Exams and Related Subjects."

Original Goals for the Committee (From Anselm Presbytery):

1. To achieve **increased clarity** of the procedures
2. To delineate a **procedure for changing the Guidelines.**
3. To improve the **exegetical paper guidelines.**
4. To evaluate the purpose of the existing procedures and make **proposed amendments** that might better serve the denomination.

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A. Summary Recommendations from the Committee, with Rationales

To meet Goal #1 "To achieve **increased clarity** of the procedures" we recommend:

- Inserting a **simple yet comprehensive numbered list of the steps** of the process for ordination examination by Presbytery into the BOP.

Rationale:

This would remove some of the existing confusion and make plain what the church, candidate, Ordination Committee (OC) and Presbytery are to do, step by step.

To meet Goal #2 "To delineate a **procedure for changing the Guidelines**" we recommend

- **Moving the "Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters"** into the BIOP as **an appendix**.

Rationale

This would clarify amendment procedures for the Guidelines, since they would now be part of the BOP.

To meet Goal #3 "To improve the **exegetical paper guidelines**" we recommend:

- Replacing the current guidelines with our new draft of the guidelines for these papers.

- Moving the evaluation of the candidate's ability to work in the **original languages** from the written ordination examination to the exegetical papers.

- **Increasing the number of exegetical papers to two**, one from the Old Testament and one from the New.

Rationale

One of the consistent concerns raised over the years by those participating in OCs (ordination committees) is that the exegetical papers frequently do not seem to read as exegetical papers. This is, we think, a problem with the guidelines, not the candidates. Therefore, we are recommending a new description of the exegetical paper and its requirements. Additionally, the current placement of translation work in the timed written ordination exam usually results in perfunctory answers to other portions of that exam. Exegesis involves working in the original languages, and we see no compelling reason for a time requirement for the candidate's translation work. Assigning two exegesis papers, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, with our new guidelines, will result in the OC being able to evaluate the candidate's ability to work in both of the primary original languages and also result in more substantive answers to the remaining portions of the written exam.

To meet Goal #4 "To evaluate the purpose of the existing procedures and make **proposed amendments** that might better serve the denomination" we recommend:

- **Eliminating the pre-screening exam**, referred to in the Guidelines and BOP as the "preliminary written exam."

Rationale

As we understand it, this exam became part of our procedures for two primary reasons. The first was to assess the candidate's educational experience. In part, this is due to the CREC's lack of a requirement for formal seminary education by ordination candidates. The second reason was to try to ensure that a candidate might be properly prepared for his oral exam, and thus not be embarrassed at that exam. We agree with both of these goals, but think that they could be better met by the OC's doing a preliminary evaluation of the candidate's particular educational experience and then tailor specialized questions or exams for each candidate accordingly. (The existing study guide could, of course, still be used by the OC.) We further recommend that the OC conduct a thorough and comprehensive private examination of the candidate, which would then culminate in an oral exam at Presbytery. This would, we think, better ensure that ordination candidates not be publicly embarrassed at the Presbyterian examination.

- Adding a **one year internship requirement**, which could be waived by the OC.

Rationale

While we are reluctant to have a minimum age requirement for candidates, it does concern us that young men, fresh out of seminary, with little or no pastoral experience, could (and have been) placed in pastorates. These inexperienced pastors, while meaning well, may not be properly equipped for the difficult work of shepherding a local church. Other reformed denominations have an intern or apprentice requirement of one or two years, which we think is wise. While the OC could waive this requirement in special cases, we recommend that the CREC normally require a one year internship of some sort.

- Adopting our draft **modifications to the timed written ordination examination**.

Rationale

It is the experience of some who have been on OCs that the exam provides little help in preparing the OC for the oral examination. This is due to several factors. First, the translation portion of the exam consumes the bulk of the candidate's time. This results in perfunctory answers to most of the balance of the exam. Second, the actual questions do not lend themselves to the sorts of answers that would provide a sense of the pastoral application of the subjects addressed in the questions. Additionally, some of the questions seem unhelpful to us, and other areas of importance (notably "Church History" and "Ethics") are not currently addressed in the exam. We therefore recommend:

A. That some of the current questions be deleted, and others reworded.

B. That we add a Church History section.

C. That we add an Ethics section, examining how the candidate moves from Biblical study to Ethics.

D. That we delete the translation portion of the exam, and that this area be covered in the exegetical papers required of the candidate.

E. That the candidate write summaries of 10 books of the bible, not the current 20.

- Preparing a document entitled "**Sample Questions for Oral Examination**" for the OC's use.

Rationale

We are concerned that there is little in our present ordination examination procedures that ensure that the OCs can adequately evaluate how the candidate would pastor. This makes it very difficult to evaluate whether or not a candidate should be recommended for ordination to the pastoral ministry. Most men serving on OCs struggle to find the time to adequately draft the sorts of questions that would more thoroughly evaluate a candidate's fitness. We believe it would be a great service to those who serve on OCs to provide them a set of such questions, which would build over the years.

- Adding a requirement that, while the OC should still be largely responsible for evaluating the Candidate, the Candidate also be subject to **examination by the whole of Presbytery**.

Rationale

Recommendation of a candidate for ordination to the gospel ministry is a matter of great weight and significance. If ordained, these men will, in addition to overseeing the basic unit of CREC life and government, the local church, be integral members of Presbyteries. We believe that such a weighty matter as judging the fitness of a man to the office of pastor and making a recommendation to the local church should ultimately rest with Presbytery. We envision a process where the OC does the bulk of the oral examination, but the candidate would still then be subject to possible questioning by all Presbytery members. This would make our procedures consistent with our Constitution (See Article II.F.) but would require changing our BOP (see XI.2.b.) as well as the Guidelines.

- Having **Presbytery, not the OC, vote** on whether or not to recommend the candidate to the local church for ordination.

Rationale

Currently, while the decision is reported to Presbytery, this decision is solely in the hands of the OC. Since the OC is representative of Presbytery, and Presbytery is the actual entity offering this service to the local church, we think the Presbytery should be the final recommending agency. Again, this would make our procedures consistent with our Constitution (See Article II.F.) but would require changing our BOP (see XI.3.a.) as well as the Guidelines.

B. Motion to Amend BOP by Adding "Guidelines and Instructions..." as Appendix B.
We move that the document titled "Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination" be added to the Book Of Procedures as Appendix B.

C. Motion to Amend BOP XI.2.a. Specifying the Location of the "Guidelines and Instructions..." as Appendix B of the BOP
We move that BOP XI.2.a be changed to:

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 [delete - available from the Minister] [add - which is Appendix B of the Book of Procedures].

D. Motion to Amend BOP XI.2.b.

We move that BOP XI.2.b. be amended as follows:

b. The examination process for ordination to the office of pastor (teaching elder) is divided into three phases: a) Preliminary [delete - written exam from the Minister administered in the context of the local church] [add - interview of the candidate by the Ordination Examination Committee appointed by the Minister of Presbytery] ; b) A written examination overseen by an Ordination Committee from the Presbytery appointed by the Minister, and c), An oral examination administered at Presbytery [delete - by] [add , overseen by] the Ordination Committee.

E. Motion to Amend BOP, Adding "Steps of the Ordination Examination Process" as XI.2.c.
We move that the following language be added to the BOP as XI.2.c.

Steps of the Ordination Examination Process

1. A local church informs the Minister of Presbytery that they have a candidate for ordination. This must be done no later than four months before the meeting of Presbytery.
2. The Minister appoints a committee of five to oversee the evaluation.
3. The committee chooses a chair.
4. 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.
5. The chair of the committee provides the prescribed CREC written examination to the session.
6. The candidate takes the written exam.
7. The chair distributes the **Sample Questions for Oral Examination** document to the committee members and the candidate.
8. The candidate submits two exegetical papers (see the guidelines for this paper 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.
9. The Committee works with the candidate, preparing him for an oral examination on the floor of Presbytery.
10. When the Committee is satisfied that the candidate will do well at the oral exam at Presbytery, the Committee informs the Minister, who schedules the exam. This must be done no later than one month prior to the Presbytery Meeting.

11. 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.
12. The oral exam is then conducted on the floor of Presbytery, overseen by the committee, and allowing questions from the assembled Presbyters.
13. After the exam, the Presbytery, in Executive Session, deliberates and votes to either recommend the candidate for ordination, or not.
14. 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.

F. Motion to Amend BOP XI.3.a.

We move that BOP XI.3.a. be amended as follows:

3. Recommendation Procedures

- a. At the end of the oral examination (phase three), the ~~Evaluation Committee~~ Presbytery will, by majority vote, recommend or not recommend the candidate for ordination at that time. The ~~Committee~~ Presbytery will report its decision and any other recommendations to ~~the Minister of the Presbytery and to~~ the elders of the local congregation. If ~~the Committee~~ Presbytery does not recommend ordination and the session determines to proceed with ordination against the recommendation of the ~~Committee~~ Presbytery, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Minister the reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The 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.*

G. Motion to Replace Current "Guidelines and Instructions..." by the Committee's New Draft
We move that Appendix B of the BOP be replaced with the following language:

Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination COMMITTEE DRAFT

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 Within 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 competencies 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 he knows [knowledge].
3. What he believes [understanding].
4. What he 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); 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 Role of the Presbytery and 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. These areas should cover:

1. His knowledge of the Bible and theology.
2. His family life, including his marriage relationship, childrearing 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 examination, he must serve in a pastoral internship. The internship 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 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 or particular elements listed here may be set aside or modified at the discretion of the Ordination Committee in consultation with the local session or it may be satisfied by ministry experience that is considered its equivalent.

SECTION 3: The Ordination Exam Process

The examination process for ordination is divided into three phases:

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

I) 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 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 Minister will appoint a five member Ordination 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 Committee. In extraordinary circumstances, Ordination Committee members may be chosen from outside the candidate's presbytery. This Ordination 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 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.

II) Phase Two: The Written Ordination Examination and Exegesis Papers

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 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 (Appendix A). 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 Exam. The Pastoral Case Studies do not require a proctor, are "open book," and to be completed outside the twelve hour time limit. The chairman of the Ordination Committee will give the candidate a reasonable due date for the completion of the entire Exam.
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 Ordination Committee).
 - b. The candidate shall write brief answers to the Ordination Questions (included in Appendix A).
 - c. The candidate shall write brief but thorough answers (1-2 pages) to the five pastoral case studies.
3. Guidelines for Exegesis Papers
As part of a candidate's examination, he shall submit two exegesis papers to the Ordination Committee for evaluation, one based on an Old Testament text and one based on a New Testament text. The papers should:
 - 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 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.

III) Phase Three: The Oral Examination

1. The candidate shall provide the Ordination Committee the following documents at least sixty days prior to the Oral Examination which will ordinarily take place during a stated meeting 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 Written Examination.
2. When the Ordination Committee reaches a point of confidence that the candidate is well prepared for the Oral Examination, the Chairman of the Ordination Committee will notify the 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 (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 competencies. The Sample Questions for Oral Examination (Appendix B) 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 will dismiss the candidate and move into executive session 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 Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The 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 requirements for this process may be modified by the Minister.

Ordinarily, churches should comply with the following:

1. Churches must request an examination for a candidate no later than four months prior to Presbytery meeting.
2. Phase One of the examination process must be completed by the candidate no later than three months prior to 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 exam should be posted to the CREC Elder Email List at least thirty days prior to his exam.
5. Under extenuating circumstances, exceptions to this schedule may be requested of the Minister of Presbytery.

SECTION 4: Ordination Transfer and "Ruling Elder" Ordination Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

We live in days where 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 competency.

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 elders of the church shall inform the Minister.
2. The Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination in the following manner: A Credentials Committee composed of three CREC presbyters will be appointed by the Minister to examine the ordained man's credentials and confirm his orthodoxy. This may take place at a time determined by the 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 their decision and any other recommendations to the 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 Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The 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.

The Ordination of Elders Not Recognized in the CREC as Pastors ("Ruling Elders")

The CREC, in a desire to assist local congregations, makes the following *recommendations* for their own examination of candidates for elders who are not recognized by the CREC as pastors. 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. Use of the CREC Study Guide and exams are useful tools to assist those seeking to become elders.
3. These may be used in an "open book" exam.
4. It is not the expectation that elders who are not pastors will have the same competence in Biblical languages.

Appendix A: Written Exam Questions (Phase Two)

The local session may add questions to the written examination but may not remove any of the standard, approved questions (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 Exam. The Pastoral Case Studies do not require a proctor, are "open book," and to be completed outside the twelve hour time limit. The chairman of the Ordination Committee will give the candidate a reasonable due date for the completion of the entire Exam.

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? Which books do you believe are canonical? What is it that makes these books canonical and gives them their authority?
- 21.
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.

Creeds/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. Which reformational confession(s) do you subscribe to? 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).

Appendix B: Sample Questions for 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 the ones 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).
3. Trace the theme of priests, kings, and 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 that's a type of Christ. The only things we can identify as types are the ones that 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 unitarianisms (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.
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." Similarly with the wine. But others say, "The body of Christ *has been* given for you. Take and eat." 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 panmillennialist. 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. If God already knows what you need and if all things work out according to His plan (Eph 1: 14), then why pray?

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 and especially her father. She confesses to a sexual relationship with her clandestine boyfriend, an unbeliever that nobody else knew. 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?

H. Motion to Create Committee to Draft revisions to "SECTION 4: Ordination Transfer and 'Ruling Elder' Ordination Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC" in the Guidelines

We move that a Committee of Council be formed to revise **H. Motion to Create Committee to Draft revisions to "SECTION 4: Ordination Transfer and 'Ruling Elder' Ordination Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC" in the Guidelines.**