

CREC Book of Procedures

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Procedures of Presbytery

ARTICLE I. Ordination Examination

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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.

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.

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. Secondly, 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. Thirdly, 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.

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.

Ordination Examination Process

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 available from the Moderator.

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

Recommendation Procedures

At the end of the (c) oral examination (phase three), the Evaluation Committee will, by majority vote, recommend or not recommend the candidate for ordination at that time. The Committee will report their decision and any other recommendations to the Moderator of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the Committee does not

recommend ordination and the session determines to proceed with ordination against the recommendation of the Committee, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Moderator their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Moderator 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 then proceed as per article 3(R) of the constitution.

Previously Ordained Men Entering the CRE

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 competency.

1. When the church desires to call a man to the office of 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 Moderator.
2. The Moderator 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 Moderator, in coordination with the local church elders.
3. The Committee will provide a report of their decision and any other recommendations to the Moderator 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 Moderator their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Moderator 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 3(R) of the constitution.

This process of assessing the credentials of a minister being called to a CRE church is described fully in the document Guidelines and Instructions for the Presbytery Ordination Exams and Related Matters of Ordination available from the Moderator.

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 II. Recognition of Ordained Ministers

1. Any CREC member church that wishes to have her minister(s) ordination formally recognized by the CREC shall submit such a request to the moderator (in writing).
2. Ordained ministers who are members of a CREC church and duly installed as a minister of that church shall be added to the list of recognized ordained men under one of the following conditions:
 - a. A previously ordained man, upon entering the CREC along with his church, was received by the presbytery and thus had his ordination formally recognized by the presbytery.
 - b. Any man who sat for a CREC ordination exam and was recommended by the examining committee, ordained by his local CREC church, and installed as a minister.
 - c. Any previously ordained man who was called by a CREC member church to be their minister, and is duly installed; subject to final approval at the next presbytery meeting.
3. The moderator shall establish and maintain a list of recognized ordained ministers in the CREC. Upon request, the moderator 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 III. Procedures for Conducting a Presbyterial 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 moderator be removed in this way, presbytery will elect a moderator 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 Moderator.
 - 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 Moderator invites the Complainant to introduce the matter.
 - d. The Moderator invites the Respondent to introduce the matter.
3. The Moderator (or his designee) charges the parties, witnesses, and the judicatory from the Scriptures, and then opens the hearing with prayer.
4. Presentation of Complainant's Case
 - a. The Complainant calls a witness, directs him by questioning, and the judicatory may follow up with questions of their own.
 - b. The witness may then be examined by the respondent, followed by another invitation to questions from the judicatory.
 - c. If the Complainant wishes to redirect the witness, he may do so, but the same opportunities for follow-up questions must be provided.
 - d. The Complainant may present any documentary or physical evidence during the course of his presentation. When the Complainant concludes his presentation, the judicatory may again pose final questions to the Complainant or to any of his witnesses.
5. At this point, 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 end and the matter will be regarded as settled.
6. Presentation of Respondent's Case
 - a. Respondent's presentation is patterned after the Complainant's presentation as described above.
7. The Moderator invites judicatory to ask any further questions of any available witness.

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 offered by the Moderator or his designee.

ARTICLE IV. Procedure for Evaluating a Candidate Ordained Outside the CREC

PROCEDURE FOR EXAMINATION

1. The purpose for examining a minister who has been ordained outside the CRE is to foster in the Presbytery both familiarity with and confidence in a man who may soon be counted among their number at Presbytery, and who would be entrusted to shepherd one of their sister churches.
2. A minister who has been ordained outside the CREC will normally be examined by Presbytery when a CREC church is considering whether or not to call him. When a church is being considered for CRE membership, and a minister in that church was ordained outside the CREC, Presbytery will examine the minister as part of the deliberation over whether to receive the church into membership.
3. Throughout the examination procedure, the Presbytery will display respect the ministerial office and the dignity of ordination in other communions. Presbytery will also show respect to the local church's ability to discern the outcome of the minister-candidate's life.
4. The examination will be conducted in open presbytery. The minister-candidate will introduce himself and publish to the Presbytery a brief written summary of his education, ministerial training and experience, and confessional commitments. Members of Presbytery may then inquire about his experiences in ministry in order to confirm his gifting, and about the regularity of his doctrine and his confessional adherence. When considering the extent and depth of questioning, Presbytery will also be mindful of the minister-candidate's experience, accomplishments, and reputation. Concerns raised in initial questioning may be pursued with follow-up questions.
5. Presbytery will normally follow such an examination with a determinations regarding the candidate, such as: (a) sustain the minister-candidate's ordination and commend him to his church, (b) advise a CREC member church not to install the minister-candidate, and for clearly-stated reasons, (c) receive the church in which he ministers into CREC membership, or not.

ARTICLE V. 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 still 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. Upon being admitted into membership in the CREC, the Moderator will ask the following questions of the delegation from the new member church.
 - a. Do you, with all the officers of our church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed the good confession before many witnesses?
 - b. Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive and adopt the Doctrinal Standards of this Confederation, subscribing to those standards with honesty and in full submission to the Word of God, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
 - c. Do you, with all the officers of your church, take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you presbyter, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood?
 - d. Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Confederation: 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 Confederation and in full submission to the Word of God?
4. When affirmative answers have been given, the moderator will then read the following statement, and then ask the delegates of all member churches to signify their agreement with a corporate “amen”:
 - a. Together with all the officers of our churches, we receive you and welcome you, our brethren, into membership in this Confederation. 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 VI: Votes at Presbytery

At votes of presbytery, each delegate has one vote. The moderator may not vote, and so in those cases when a church has only one vote because one of their delegates has been elected moderator, the church may put forth a new delegate to take the place of the moderator. If the church cannot put forth a replacement, the remaining delegate has two votes.

ARTICLE VII: Procedure for Appeal

1. Amidst any appeals procedure within the CREC, reconciliation between parties will remain a central objective. Such reconciliation may render it unnecessary to press this procedure through to completion.
2. The moderator of the appropriate judicatory will determine whether a party is qualified to bring an appeal.
3. Appellant will notify both the respondent and the moderator 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 moderator 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 moderator.
6. The moderator may seek the counsel of other presbyters to assist in his decision to hear or dismiss the case.
7. If the moderator chooses to allow the case to move forward, he shall appoint a court of at least three presbyters (representing at least three different CRE 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 their findings to the full presbytery. By vote, the presbytery will either sustain or, if there is cause, nullify the court's decision.

ARTICLE VIII: Formal, Non-Binding Fraternal Relations

The CREC welcomes and encourages formal, non-binding, fraternal relations with likeminded churches, presbyteries and denominations. By “fraternal relations,” we mean to declare our mutual respect and acceptance of one another as members of the body of Christ. We expect to be able to speak to, encourage, and admonish one another. Moreover, such fraternal relations would allow us to share pulpits, transfer members and commune with one another.

The following procedures should be followed to establish formal, fraternal relations between the C.R.E. and other churches, presbyteries or denominations:

1. Any church, presbytery or denomination that desires formal, fraternal relations with the CREC may make such a request by submitting a letter to the Moderator of the CREC Presbytery or Church Council.
 - a. The Moderator of the Presbytery or Church Council will present the request prior to the next presbytery or council meeting to her member churches.
 - b. The member churches will vote to enter or not enter into formal, fraternal relations with the requesting church, presbytery or denomination. A two-thirds vote of Presbytery or Council shall be required.
 - c. Upon the vote, the Moderator shall send a letter to the requesting church, presbytery or denomination, which shall state our formal acceptance or rejection of their request for formal fraternal relations.
 - d. All such actions shall be recorded in the minutes.
2. CREC Presbyteries or Church Council may likewise submit request for formal, fraternal relations to other churches, presbyteries or denominations
 - a. At the request of the Presbytery or Church Council (two-thirds vote required), the Moderator of the Presbytery or Church Council will send a letter to the church, presbytery or denomination, requesting formal, fraternal relations and ask for a written affirmative or negative reply.
 - b. Upon receipt of the written reply, the Moderator shall inform the CREC member churches of the response.
 - c. All such actions shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Presbytery or Council.

ARTICLE IX: Mission Churches

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 for the conditions for the particularization of that mission church.

DEFINITIONS:

Mission church: A constituted body of Christians under the oversight of a particularized church whose intent is to establish a new particularized church.

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.

PROCEDURE:

1. Mission Church: A church shall be considered a mission church of a member CREC church when the following conditions have been met:
 - a. A constitution has been written to define and govern the mission work.
 - i. The mother church approves the constitution and doctrinal standards of the mission church (which may or may not be identical to mother churches).
 - ii. The mother church appoints a session *pro tempore* over the mission church.
 - iii. These actions put the mission church into existence.
 - b. Under this constitution and session *pro tempore*:
 - i. New members can be received.
 - ii. The mission's constitution may be modified by its own amendment process.
 - iii. New officers may be examined, ordained and installed.
2. The Session:
 - a. The session *pro tempore* of the mission church shall be comprised 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.
 - b. This session *pro tempore* shall not be the session of the mother church, but only the session of the mission church.
 - c. 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.

- d. 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.
3. Conditions for Particularization:
 - a. The mission church shall have its own constitution and bylaws.
 - b. The mission church shall have been formally constituted for not less than two years.
 - c. 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.
 - d. The mother church may require other conditions.
 - e. The session of the mother church has formally acknowledged that conditions for particularization (a-d above) have been met.
 - f. Presbytery acknowledges that conditions a-e above have been met, and does so by receiving the mission church into presbytery membership.
4. Relationship to the CREC.
 - a. All mission churches of CREC member churches shall automatically have mission status in the CREC.
 - b. This mission status may be maintained until the mission is particularized.
 - c. Once conditions are met for particularization, the mission church shall be eligible for full CREC membership at the next CREC presbytery meeting.
 - d. As extensions of a member CRE church, all mission churches shall meet the constitutional and doctrinal requirements of the CREC.
 - e. 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.
5. Ordination of Teaching and Ruling Elders.
 - a. 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.
 - b. The actual ordination and installation of officers shall be conducted under the oversight of the mission church session *pro tempore*.
6. Termination of Relationship:
 - a. Termination of the relationship between mother and daughter church can happen in two ways:

- i. The daughter church becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership;
- ii. A unanimous vote of mother church's session to terminate the relationship.

7. Visits:

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

ARTICLE X: Conducting an Election for Moderator/Moderator Pro Tem of Presbytery or Church Council in the Absence of Nominees

1. The Moderator will invite nominations from any delegate to presbytery.
2. In order for a nominee to be recognized as a candidate, his nomination must be seconded on the floor of presbytery, and the nominee must vocalize his consent to be a candidate. The nomination and second may not come from two elders serving in the same church.
3. In due time, moderator will close the nominations and identify the candidates.
4. Moderator will invite open discussion about the candidates. Delegates may use this time to ask questions of the candidates or elicit statements from them. Delegates may also speak for or against any candidate.
5. Roll call vote will be taken or at the Moderator's discretion, a written ballot will be tallied. The candidate with the most votes will be the next moderator. The current Moderator tallies the votes and then shall declare the results of the election.

ARTICLE XI: CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

1. The official language of the broader assemblies of the CREC will be English.
 - a. All meetings will be conducted in English.
 - b. Any delegates to Presbytery or Church Council must be accompanied by an interpreter.