



# COMMUNION OF REFORMED EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

## Council Agenda Supplementary Materials November 2017

### Supplementary Material 1

#### Consent Agenda/Action Item 6

*The proposed action here is to register this item as having been read, and therefore eligible for consideration at Council in 2020.*

#### **First Reading of a Proposed Memorial on Abortion Proposed CREC Memorial on Abortion<sup>1</sup>**

Without exception, the God revealed in Holy Scripture sides with, and acts to protect, the weak and powerless (Dt. 10:18) and sets Himself against those who would harm or take advantage of the widow, the orphan or the alien (Ex. 22:22; Dt. 27:19.) He is the Father of the fatherless (Ps. 68:5) and those who love Him are called to imitate Him (Jas. 1:27).

Throughout Scripture, unborn babies are regarded as immature human beings, and therefore true bearers of God's image (Gen. 1:27; Ps. 127:3-5) and objects of His loving care. From the twin boys struggling in Rebekah's womb to the pre-born John the Baptist who leaped for joy at the approach of his pre-born Savior, God clearly regards the unborn as His handiwork (Ps. 139:13-16; Is. 44:2). Babies in the womb are persons with legal standing (Ex. 21:22-25), covenant status (Ps. 22:10), continuity of personhood (Judg. 13:2-5; Ps. 51:5), and the cognitive capabilities requisite for true worship (Lk. 1:41-44). Jesus himself demonstrated great love and concern for small children (Mt. 19:13) and pronounced dire consequences for those who would mistreat them (Lk. 17:2). To love children is to imitate God.

Because pre-born humans bear the image of God and are innocent of criminal wrongdoing, the act of abortion is murder (Dt. 5:17). While all sin is deserving of judgment (Ro. 6:23), the sin of murder is especially egregious because it is a Satanic, all-out assault on the image of God (Gen.

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1 Proposed by Gene Helsel. Adopted by Knox Presbytery, Sep 21, 2016.

3:15, 9:6). Biblically, the unlawful taking of human life performed by individuals results in a corporate guilt that defiles the land (Dt. 21:1-9).

Until very recently, the Church of Jesus Christ has strongly and uniformly opposed abortion. The *Didache*, a first century summary of Christian ethics, explicitly prohibits abortion and infanticide. And the early Church was known throughout the Roman Empire for its rescue and adoption of unwanted infants abandoned and left to die of exposure.

Therefore, we detest and decry any and all taking of pre-born human life whether through the various types of abortive procedures, the use of the so-called morning after pill, or the use of abortifacients. This includes aborting babies that are the result of rape and incest, and especially aborting those whose race, gender or physical and/or mental capabilities are not to the parent's liking. Even in those rare circumstances when a pregnancy causes an immediate threat to the life of a mother, the calling of doctors and surgeons is to do all they can to preserve life, not take it.

We oppose abortion not only because it assaults God's image by taking innocent human life, but also because it wreaks spiritual and emotional devastation on the mothers who have abortions and those who encourage them to do so. Parents shoulder the responsibility of bringing into existence beings who will populate eternity. Taking the lives of these children unjustly tears the fabric of love that unites parents to their children and sears the conscience (1 Tim. 4:1-2; Eph. 4:17-24).

We are therefore committed to stridently oppose all local and national entities that promote and provide abortion services. At the same time, with equal vigor, we are committed to support and fund organizations that promote the cause of the unborn and provide support and services for men and women who are grappling with the challenges and decisions attendant to unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies or who are suffering from the guilt of having taken an innocent human life (1 John 3:18; Ro. 12:15). Additionally, we applaud and support the people and organizations laboring to expose the wickedness and extent of the abortion industry (Eph. 5:11).

While applauding most efforts to protect the unborn, we abhor the violence of anti-abortion vigilantes who are willing to destroy property and even to take life in their attempt to oppose this sin. We eschew the weapons of the flesh, wielding instead with the weapons of the Spirit (2 Cor. 10:4): Gospel preaching (2 Tim. 3:2-3), psalm-singing/corporate worship (Ps. 29; 2 Chron. 20:20-22), prayer (Mat. 5:44, Eph. 6:18), apologetic discussion (1 Pet. 3:15-16; 2 Cor. 10:5-6), as well as peaceful protest and civil disobedience (Ex. 1:17; Dan. 3:16-18, 6:10).

In conclusion, we vehemently oppose the sin of abortion for love's sake: love for God, love for the unborn, love for the parents, and love for the nations languishing under the curse of this heinous sin (Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Dt. 21:1-9). We pray for wisdom to engage our unbelieving culture winsomely, resolutely and decisively. And we pray for grace to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:14-15) to our brothers and sisters in other churches and denominations currently thinking through, or rethinking, what God has revealed about the preciousness of human life before and after birth (Ps. 139:1-16).

## **Supplementary Material 2**

This is a placeholder for the Missions Committee Report.

# Supplementary Material 3

## Creedal Standardization Committee CREC Council Report, November 2017

### Background

Beginning at least as far back as 2013, some CREC pastors have raised questions about the form of the text of the Ecumenical Creeds embedded in the denominational constitution (Article X) and displayed on the CREC website. No one seems to be certain of the origin of these particular forms, and specific questions have been raised about the exact wording used.

To address these matters, on January 15, 2015, Presiding Minister of Council, Pastor Douglas Wilson, appointed Pastor Stuart Bryan and Pastor Jack Phelps to serve as a Standardization Committee. The committee's assigned task was to develop recommendations to Council for forms of the creeds that could be adopted to replace the forms currently in use.

### Process

At the outset, the committee decided to use *The Creeds of Christendom*, edited by Philip Schaff, as the starting point for the forms to be used by the CREC. This seemed reasonable because these volumes are a standard work in the field, are widely used and available and are of unquestioned historical authority in theological academia. It is difficult to imagine a theological library of any standing anywhere in the English speaking world that does not contain a copy of these three volumes.

Next, we scrupulously examined the CREC's current forms phrase by phrase and word by word, including all punctuation. We then compared this analysis with the various forms appearing in Schaff.<sup>2</sup>

The committee also deliberated over how much to modernize language in the older forms. In the end, we decided to take a light touch in this regard. Primarily, this decision was due to the language in Article III of the constitution that reads, in relevant part: "A CREC local church may use forms of the creeds that differ from the forms found in the CREC Constitution . . . 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."

### Recommendations

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<sup>2</sup> The Apostles' Creed is given in Greek, Latin and English. Tables also illustrate the development of the creed into its final form. The committee used the Received Form as its final basis of comparison. The Nicene Creed is given in Greek and Latin forms from both 325 and 381, and in English in the form adopted in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The latter was used by the committee as a basis of comparison. The Definition of Chalcedon is given in Greek, Latin and English, with the English apparently being a translation of the Greek form. The committee's deliberations on the Definition were influenced by Schaff's footnotes, which were found to be insightful.

In the end, we recommended using Schaff’s “Received Form” of the Apostles’ Creed, with minor typographic alterations (i.e., capitalization conventions, changing “sitteth” to “sits,” etc.). For the Nicene Creed, we recommended using Schaff’s Received Text of the Protestant Churches, again with minor typographic alterations.

For the Definition of Chalcedon, we decided to part with Schaff’s direct English translation of the Greek. In its stead, we recommend using the form adopted in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

The committee’s recommendations are set forth in the attachment to this report, in tabular form. The first column sets out the current language in the CREC constitution. The middle column contains the language recommended for adoption. The column on the right contains explanatory notes.

*Motion:* CREC Council adopts the recommendations of the Creedal Standardization Committee and amends Constitution Article X to replace existing language with the language proposed by the committee.

Respectfully submitted by

Rev. Jack Phelps  
Rev. Stuart Bryan

The Apostles’ Creed		
CREC Website	Proposed	Comments/Rationale
I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth,	I/We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.	<i>Granting liberty to recite these in the first person singular or plural reflects current diversity and the reality of the personal and corporate dimensions of the faith. The proposed version is found in Schaff.</i>
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hades. On the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.	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>“Begotten” is borrowed in our existing form from the Nicene – not sure why.</i>
I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church,	I/We believe in the Holy Ghost;	Schaff has “quick” – recommend “living.”

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.	the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.	
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The Nicene Creed		
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CREC Website	Proposed	Comments/Rationale
<p>I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;</p> <p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His 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.</p> <p>And I 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.</p> <p>And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church; acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.</p> <p>Amen.</p>	<p>I/We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Amen.</p>	<p><i>Again granting liberty to recite these in the first person singular or plural. The proposed version is found in Schaff.</i></p> <p>Schaff has “quick” – recommend “living.”</p> <p>Schaff has “spake” – recommend “spoke”</p>

## The Definition of Chalcedon

CREC Website	Proposed	Comments/Rationale
<p>Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanity; truly God and truly man, with a rational soul and a body;</p> <p>consubstantial with the Father according to His deity, and consubstantial with us according to the humanity; like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before the ages He was begotten of the Father, according to the deity,</p> <p>and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, He was born of Mary the virgin, who is Godbearer according to His humanity;</p> <p>one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures; without confusing them, without interchanging them, without dividing them, and without separating them; the distinction of natures by no means taken away by the union, but the properties of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one subsistence; not parted or divided into two persons,</p> <p>but one and the same only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ,</p> <p>as from the beginning the prophets have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.</p>	<p>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;</p> <p>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,</p> <p>but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer;</p> <p>one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation;</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>This proposed version is the traditional English version from the Book of Common Prayer found online at: <a href="http://www.bcponline.org">www.bcponline.org</a> under "Historical Documents of the Church." On the whole, this is a more poetic and balanced translation. The one on our website is clunky and erroneous at points – see below.</i></p> <p><i>"of one substance" seems clearer than "consubstantial"</i></p> <p><i>Notice the balance in these two phrases: first "as regards his Godhead,"</i></p> <p><i>then "as regards his manhood." Our current translation upsets this balance and hinders memorization.</i></p> <p><i>These phrases are also suggested by Schaff's footnotes to Chalcedon in Vol. 2, p. 65.</i></p> <p><i>The current version inexplicably drops Theon Logon.</i></p> <p><i>"creed" is more clear for English speakers than "symbol"</i></p>

## Supplementary Material 4

### Letter from the Presiding Minister



COMMUNION OF REFORMED  
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

October 15, 2017

Brothers in the Lord, greetings,

I trust that this letter finds you well, growing and thriving in the grace of our Lord Jesus.

As of my last letter to you, the situation in Grand Prairie had not been completely resolved. Since then it has been (more or less). A court was appointed to adjudicate a dispute that had arisen there. In short form, the decision of the court was displeasing to the leadership of Christ Covenant Church, and they have as a consequence departed from the CREC. Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow received some of their former members into membership at TRC, and is now overseeing a small group that meets on the Lord's Day in Grand Prairie. A decision has yet to be made on whether a formal church plant there is viable. More details about that case can be found in the letter from Jack Phelps, who served as the acting presiding minister in that situation.

Second, on September 8, 2017, I sent a letter to the Council delegates, explaining to them that I had determined the following: *The business arrangement between the CREC and MinistrySafe will expire on noon of Monday, November 20, 2017.* I am asking you to receive and ratify this action.

Third, an unfortunate set of circumstances unfolded at Reformation Covenant Church in Oregon City. The short form is that several elders resigned abruptly, leaving Dennis Tuuri as the sole elder. Three *pro tem* elders were appointed by Jack Phelps (Gene Helsel, John Stoos, and Garry Vanderveen). In the course of



their labors, they determined to set new elder candidates before the congregation, which constitutionally required a unanimous vote of the session. Because of the tensions in the congregation, Dennis had voluntarily refrained from voting, but had not been removed from the session. When a slate of new candidates was put forward, Dennis attempted to vote on them, and the *pro tem* elders did not count his vote.

After this formal action on the session's part, Jack determined (and I agreed) that Dennis had legitimate grounds for an appeal. Jack expended a considerable amount of effort trying to find out from Dennis whether he was going to appeal. Dennis did not respond to Jack's calls and emails, and did not appeal within the time limit established by the Book of Procedures (Art. X.3). I had told Jack during this time that if Dennis appealed, I would appoint a court to hear the case.

Just last month, I received a complaint (not an appeal) filed by Dennis (9/23/17), which I declined to hear because I did not believe that his complaint fit our constitutional definition of a complaint. I believe that when the *pro tem* elders declined to count his vote, that constituted a formal action that could have been appealed. In our Constitution, a complaint is defined as a charge that has not been adjudicated for one of four specific reasons. I did not believe that this case was "not adjudicated" for any of those four reasons, and that a formal action *had* been taken which would have justified an earlier appeal. In addition to rejecting Dennis's appeal, I also turned down an *amicus* submission on behalf of Dennis from Gabe Wetmore (9/28/17, 9/30/17).

So I have taken three actions with regard to this situation. The first is that I rejected the complaint on constitutional grounds. I am specifically making no comment on the merits of the complaint itself. As came out in my discussion with Gabe, if the refusal of voting rights to Dennis constituted a formal action on the part of the session, then I believe the reasoning for my refusal stands. But if it is determined that the refusal to let him vote was *not* a formal action because it was not properly adjudicated at the local level, then it could follow that hearing this complaint would be appropriate.

The second action is this. Because there is no time limit on when a formal complaint can be filed, I notified Dennis (10/12/17) that he had one week to register a formal request for referral from the session of RCC (with regard to the substance of his complaint), and I notified the session of RCC (10/12/17) that they had one week from the receipt of that letter (if sent) to refuse or refer it. If they

refuse it, then a new clock would start within which an appeal could be made. If they refer it, then the presiding minister of Anselm or I will take appropriate action. If they take no action, then one of the four criteria for accepting a complaint would be fulfilled. In either case, I would accept the appeal/complaint. If it comes to me as an appeal, I would make it clear to the court that their task would not include a restoration of the *status quo ante*, but rather simply a determination of the rights and wrongs of the case. This one item is constitutionally tricky because in effect it is treating an appeal like a complaint. Prior to finalizing this letter, I received notice that Dennis had indeed made a formal request that the session of RCC refer the case to Council (10/13/17). I do not yet know how the RCC session will respond.

With the submission of this letter, I am (perhaps) asking Council to ratify my action in declining to hear this complaint. If Council does so, then the denial would be sustained. If Council declines to ratify my action in this, then the way would be open for the next presiding minister to appoint a court to hear the complaint. But remember that your action one way or the other could affect the current request for referral. So whether or not I am asking for action from Council depends on the outcome of what I describe in the previous paragraph, which I will not know at the time I submit this letter. I am sorry to leave a mess for the next presiding minister, but there it is.

My third action in this affair was to appoint a committee to propose revisions to our constitutional language that would amend some of the ambiguities in our documents that this case revealed. I have asked Jack Phelps to chair the committee (10/3/17), and to fill the committee with two or three men to help him.

For various reasons, I am disbanding the following committees:

1. Relations to other Reformed bodies (Garry Vanderveen). As I understand it, Gary's ability to run with this task was impacted by his transfer into the PCA.
2. Division into more presbyteries (Randy Booth). This committee languished.
3. System of doctrine (Garry V.) The same rationale applies here as with #1
4. Child security (Uri Brito). This committee felt that their work was rendered somewhat moot by the report to Christ Church along with the involvement of MinistrySafe.

5. I believe the task of the Same Sex Committee to be one of some urgency, and so I would recommend shaking this committee up in such a way as to get a report soon. But I will leave that task to the next presiding minister.

Next, I have worked together with Andrew Crapuchettes on a web site that should address our MDS difficulties. Our existing active MDS files have been uploaded into profiles at PastorCV.com, and we are creating a system that searching pastors and searching churches can both use. The profiles are under the control of the individual concerned, and the search field is adjustable.

And last, since we last met, the committee made up of the presiding ministers of the CREC delivered to us the report that the session of Christ Church had requested of them. We do thank the committee for the labor they expended on our behalf. Upon receiving the report, we posted it on our web site the following day, and also had it posted on the CREC web page. A few weeks after that, we held a congregational meeting where we detailed our reactions to the report. Because we did not want it to turn into an Internet thing, we did not hand out any materials. But in summary, we particularly noted that Part 1 and the Appendices were just the sort of report we had requested, and we outlined a number of the adjustments and corrections that we had made or were making in line with the report. At the same time, for various reasons, we believe that Part 2 was out of line, and we explained why we believed that to our congregation. That said, we are glad that this chapter is over, and we will be much more careful in the future.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you as presiding minister. May God richly bless you all.

Cordially in Christ,

Douglas Wilson

# Supplementary Material 5

Acting Presiding Minister of Council  
Report to Council/November, 2017

1. In February, 2016, I was elected at an *ad hoc* Council meeting to fill the unexpired term of Pastor Randy Booth as PM *Pro Tempore* of Council (also called Assistant to the PM of Council; see Article IV.C.6.b). Pastor Booth had resigned his position. Subsequently, PM Wilson appointed me as Acting PM of Council on one matter, as set forth in Item 2, below.
2. Grande Prairie, Alberta, Court Case (*Barendregt v. Christ Covenant Church*)
  - a. On January 26, 2016, three members of Christ Covenant Church, Grande Prairie, Alberta, jointly filed a Complaint under Article IV.D.4 of the CREC Constitution against the Session (locally called a “Council”) of Christ Covenant Church, alleging “gross misbehavior” by the “Council.”
  - b. The Complaint was filed with the Presiding Minister of Knox Presbytery, Pastor Alan Burrow. Pastor Burrow certified that the Complaint was not frivolous and met the criteria of the Constitution for a valid Complaint. Subsequently, Pastor Burrow determined that the Complaint should be referred to Council under Article IV.D.4(g) of the CREC Constitution, and he made such a referral to Council PM Pastor Douglas Wilson.
  - c. PMoC Wilson is related by marriage to one of the complainants, so Pastor Wilson determined that he should recuse himself from handling the Complaint. He then appointed me as Acting Presiding Minister of Council to handle the case. This occurred just days after Council had elected me to fill Pastor Booth’s unexpired term.
  - d. Having officially received proper jurisdiction, on or about February 25, 2016, I appointed five men to a Council Court to hear the case. The five members of the Court were: Pastor Uri Britto (Athanasius), Pastor Stuart Bryan (Knox), Pastor Jason Farley (Calvin), Pastor Gregg Strawbridge (Augustine), and Pastor Steve Wilkins (Wycliffe). The Court subsequently elected Pastor Strawbridge as Chairman.
  - e. The case was then complicated by an action of the Christ Covenant Church “Council.” On February 26, 2016, the “Council” issued a writ of excommunication against the three men who had filed the Complaint. This was done against the strong counsel of Presiding Minister Burrow, who cited, among other factors, the impropriety of taking disciplinary action against members who have an official Complaint pending against the same officers who would be voting to exercise the most extreme form of church discipline, excommunication. The problem was all the more awkward, since the charges leading to excommunication were precisely those that were under review by the Court.
  - f. On March 3, 2016, the parties to the Complaint filed an Appeal of the excommunication action by the Christ Covenant Church “Council” under Article IV.D.3 of the CREC Constitution. The Acting Presiding Minister of Council and

the Court determined that the Appeal met the criteria in the constitution because it was not frivolous and it alleged “gross misconduct.” The Acting PMoC and the Court agreed to consolidate the Complaint and Appeal in this case. *Barendregt v. Christ Covenant Church* then went forward as a combined case.

- g. The Court heard the case and issued its Ruling on April 23, 2016. On several major points, the Ruling found in favor of Complainants and against the “Council” of Christ Covenant Church. One of several relief actions required by the Ruling directed the parties to receive a delegation appointed by the Acting PM of Council “to oversee a meeting for the purpose of reconciliation between the two parties.”
- h. On June 13, 2016, as Acting PM of Council, I appointed the following men to the required Delegation of Council: Rev. Stuart Bryan (Coeur d'Alene), Rev. Kenton Spratt (Spokane), Rev. Dan Glover (Ft. St. John). The Delegation traveled to Grande Prairie on or about June 16, 2016. The results were unsatisfactory and the desired reconciliation did not occur, as reported in the Delegation’s official report, dated July 6, 2016. One of the Delegation’s recommendations was for the Acting Presiding Minister to appoint a Pastoral Commission to visit Grande Prairie and assist the Christ Covenant Church “Council” to revise its approach to exercising governance, especially with respect to discipline matters, and to work toward reconciliation with the parties whose Complaint and Appeal had been upheld.
- i. On July 6, 2016, as Acting PM of Council, I appointed two men to a Pastoral Commission to visit Grande Prairie as a follow-up to the work of the previous Delegation, as recommended in the Delegation’s Report. Members of the Pastoral Commission were Rev. Dan Glover (Ft. St. John) and Rev. Joshua Appel (Trinity, Moscow). On or about July 8, 2016, the Pastoral Commission visited Grande Prairie and met with the parties. This Commission was also unable to bring about reconciliation between the parties and was likewise unsuccessful in convincing the Christ Covenant Church “Council” to revise its stance of resistance to the counsel of the Broader Church. The Pastoral Commission filed its Report to the Acting PM of Council on July 15, 2016.
- j. Having exhausted all the resources available to me as Acting Presiding Minister of Council for the Grande Prairie case, I referred the matter back to Knox Presbytery for further follow-up.
- k. At the 2016 Annual Stated Meeting of Knox Presbytery, the Ruling of the Council Court and the reports of both the Delegation of Council and the Pastoral Commission were laid before Knox Presbytery. Knox Presbytery graciously and patiently gave Christ Covenant Church of Grande Prairie some options to work toward greater compliance and cooperation with her fellow churches in the CREC, in keeping with the vows of membership she took when she joined the denomination. In the event, Christ Covenant Church chose not to pursue those options and withdrew its membership in the CREC, under Article III.J of the CREC Constitution.
- l. Prior to its departure from the CREC, Christ Covenant Church transferred the membership of the three families who were parties to the Complaint and the Appeal (they had been restored to good standing but had been told they were not welcome in worship) to Trinity Reformed Church, Moscow. Subsequently, one of

the families moved to Alaska and their membership was transferred from Trinity Reformed to Covenant Bible Church where they are now members in good standing. The other two families remain under the care of Trinity Reformed.

- m. All documents pertaining to *Barendregt v. Christ Covenant Church* are in the files of the Acting Presiding Minister, and are available for review by the delegates to Council upon request.
  - n. **I hereby request Council ratification of my actions in this case, to wit:**
    - n.i. Appointment of the Council Court (item d above)
    - n.ii. Consolidation of the Complaint and Appeal (item f above)
    - n.iii. Appointment of the Delegation of Council (item h above)
    - n.iv. Appointment of the Pastoral Commission (item i above)
3. Service on the Presiding Ministers Review Committee<sup>3</sup>
- a. In October, 2015, in response to a request from Christ Church, Moscow, then-Presiding Minister *pro tempore* of Council Rev. Randy Booth appointed a Review Committee (hereinafter, RC) to look into the controversy surrounding two sex abuse cases that occurred in Moscow approximately ten years earlier. As stated in an announcement issued on October 3, 2015, members were appointed by Pastor Booth, acting in his capacity as Acting Presiding Minister for this activity. The members appointed were chosen because they were currently the Presiding Ministers of their respective presbyteries, except that, in one case, the man appointed was the PM *pro tempore* of his presbytery (Tyndale). The announcement further indicated that Pastor Booth would serve as chairman of the RC.
  - b. On November 7, 2015, the RC released a Mission Statement explaining its goals and process. This document, which was immediately posted on the CREC website, contained the following statement: “It is possible that part of the Committee’s work will include bringing in outside and independent counsel to help with its efforts as well as provide training in dealing with matters of abuse that may arise within our churches in the future.”
  - c. In early 2016, Pastor Booth resigned as PM *pro tempore* of Council, thus also removing himself from service on the RC. In February, 2016, Pastor Jack Phelps, Presiding Minister of Anselm Presbytery, was elected by Council as Presiding Minister *pro tempore* of Council, to fill Pastor Booth’s unexpired term. However, it should be noted that he was already on the RC, in his capacity as the Presiding Minister of Anselm Presbytery.
  - d. After Pastor Booth’s resignation, the RC held a conference and decided that there was no need to appoint a new chairman, believing the RC could pursue and complete its work without one. The RC did, however, appoint Pastor Phelps as spokesman for the committee on those rare occasions when such was needed. Pastor Phelps was also asked to moderate the meetings.

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<sup>3</sup> This item is reported *pro forma* but is not believed to require ratification by Council for reasons explained in the sub-points.

- e. In keeping with discussions that had taken place very early in the RC's existence, and as reflected in the public statement of November 7, 2015, the RC eventually decided to engage the law firm of Love & Norris of Fort Worth, Texas, as outside counsel to the committee. In conjunction with this, the committee also engaged with MinistrySafe, a non-profit advisory and training group, one of whose principals is Ms. Kimberlee Norris, who was also serving as the RC's outside counsel. The decision to enter this engagement was on a unanimous vote of the RC, and committee members agreed to raise the funds necessary to pay the associated fees and costs. The money was raised through voluntary donations from multiple churches within the CREC, and no obligation was laid on the CREC Council, nor upon the various presbyteries. In other words, the engagement of the law firm and of MinistrySafe did not entail an obligation on the denomination as an entity. The agreement was between MinistrySafe and the members of the committee.
- f. The participation of Love & Norris in the RC's work included legal review of the committee's draft report and legal advice regarding how to phrase certain parts of the report to minimize legal exposure for the CREC and her member churches, including the two Moscow churches whose activities were under review. All exchanges with Love & Norris were privileged communications between an attorney and her client. Documents exchanged were attorney work product and were likewise privileged.
- g. Among the various services that the RC's agreement with MinistrySafe secured were a presentation at one presbytery meeting in 2016 (Anselm) and a presentation at Council in 2017, to provide basic training to pastors and other church leaders in preventing sexual abuse from arising in the church context and responding to such situations should they occur. MinistrySafe also agreed to provide guidance for policy that the CREC can incorporate into a future policy statement that could be adopted by the CREC Council. This final deliverable will be available at the Council meeting in November. At that time, no further engagement with MinistrySafe is secured or envisioned. Individual churches or presbyteries are free to join MinistrySafe and engage its services, but the RC's agreement with it does not extend beyond the Council meeting in Florida.
- h. The Review Committee's Final Reports were sent to Christ Church and Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow on August 16, 2017. This concluded the RC's work.
- i. During the work of the Review Committee, I took no action in my official capacity as Presiding Minister *pro tempore* of Council. Hence, there is no item for me to submit for ratification. All my actions on the committee were as Presiding Minister of Anselm Presbytery, and as one among seven PMs on the RC. I did report my committee work to Anselm at its stated meeting in 2016, and I did receive a unanimous vote of ratification for inviting MinistrySafe to make a presentation at the 2017 Council meeting. The presentation at Anselm was excellent and was well received by the Anselm delegates who attended.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jack E. Phelps, Presiding Minister of Council *pro tempore*

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches



# Supplementary Material 6

## Council Business/Action Item 20

### Modification of the Memorial on Terrorism

#### 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 (Deuteronomy 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 (Is. 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 Thes. 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 (Ps 2:10-12; 110).

# Supplementary Material 7

## Council Business/Action Item 23

Ordination Procedures:

### Proposal for an Improvement in the CREC Ordination Examination Process

[From the Augustine Presbytery of the CREC]

#### RATIONALE

We give thanks to the LORD for all that have worked to improve our process of examination and ordination since the beginning of the CREC.<sup>4</sup> The current proposal arises out of recent experience in our presbytery. Since Oct. 2016, two men have undergone examination in the Augustine Presbytery (Rev. Jared McNabb and Rev. Jon Herr). Going through this process, Augustine Presbytery saw some areas for improvement and several of our pastors, along with other ministers across the CREC, contributed to this proposal.

#### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

#### PROCESS CHANGES

1. Require an “Application” of a ministerial candidate including a Ministerial Data Form (MDF), as well as other biographical and personal statements. This will reduce unnecessary questions, e.g., (from the Written exam) “What is your educational background?”
2. The written examination should qualify the candidate for *beginning* the oral examination process.<sup>5</sup> The proposed process is: a) making application, b) demonstrating aptitude through the written exam, c) committee assessment, and d) Presbytery approval/disapproval.
3. The current BOP requirement for examination prior to a pastor “moving on the field” should be clarified.<sup>6</sup> We propose “licensure” by a *Presbytery committee* (rather than the local congregation/mother congregation) as the best option *in lieu* of a regular ordination exam/ordination (prior to taking up pastoral duties).

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4 On the history of ordination procedures in the CREC, the first committee to work on this was chaired by Randy Booth and Gregg Strawbridge (member of the committee) proposed the first CREC procedures (Appendix B of the BOP) at the 2005 Council (motion 05/10/13:2). In 2011 a new committee, chaired by Dennis Tuuri, provided what is currently our Appendix B (motion 11/10/6:6, then amendments). In 2011 the following changes took place: the removal of a qualifying examination, beginning the process with a committee interview, the removal of original languages translation in lieu of an OT/NT paper, the addition of a presbytery floor exam (in 2005ff it was an open committee exam, but not in the presbytery meeting), the addition of a church history portion of the written exam (with 10 events/people), the addition of five pastoral case studies, the requirement of a pastoral internship, the addition of more situational oral questions, and a complete rewrite of the written/oral exam questions. Many of these changes have proven very useful.

5 Since 2011 (when the current BOP process was adopted), there have been several cases of a candidate not being ready to sit for the floor exam at Presbytery. Making the written exam the first step, would provide a baseline of knowledge which would give a strong indication (on the front end) of the candidate’s readiness for involvement with a committee and at Presbytery.

6 BOP XI.1.d. - “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.” The CREC has permitted several “work arounds” for moving to the field: “licensure,” an “interim call,” ordaining a minister as a “ruling elder,” etc.

## CONTENT CHANGES

4. Revision of the “Written Questions” (Book of Procedures [BOP] Appendix B): a) Added more precise questions.<sup>7</sup> b) Added Bible knowledge questions. c) Structured the questions akin to the Trivium in educational methodology (e.g. “list, outline, discuss, define, and defend”). d) Added a section on Church polity/CREC polity.
5. This revision of the “Written Examination” is to be closed book (no open Bible). This would show the candidate’s knowledge of Scripture and provide an examination committee with a better sense of the candidate’s weaknesses and strengths.

## PRINCIPLE CHANGES

6. The BOP language for ministers “without call” is expanded to include the concept of CREC-approved ministers serving “out of bounds” in churches and ministries transitioning toward the CREC and who desire to have a strong CREC association. This would provide for some Presbytery level involvement of CREC-approved ministers (yet, not serving in a CREC church).
7. The CREC permits various views of church offices (e.g., 2 office, 3 office, 4 office).<sup>8</sup> However, as it stands, our governing documents require a Continental/Congregational view of ordination: only the local congregation may ordain.<sup>9</sup> Since we permit diversity in offices, we should also permit a diversity in “who may ordain.”<sup>10</sup> We propose the local church or the Presbytery may lay on hands to ordain.<sup>11</sup> This should be left to the discretion of the local

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7 The 2011 BOP App. B, had some questions that were too broad: e.g., “60. What does Scripture teach concerning prayer?”

8 CREC Constitution (2014) II.A. “The CREC takes no constitutional position on the validity of 2-, 3- or 4 -office view of church minister.”

9 CREC Constitution II.F. “Any candidate for pastor, minister, or teacher 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.”

10 Eerdmans Dictionary like most sources define ordination as, “The appointment or installation of religious officials.” See Ex. 29 and Lev. 8. The ISBE points out that in the NT the “laying on of hands” imparts a spiritual gift for service (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). This should be done prior to serving in the role of minister/pastor.

11 First Timothy 4:14 states: “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with *the laying on of hands by the Presbytery.*” The term here, *presbuterion*, is used of the “Council of the elders” (Luke 22:66, Acts 22:5). Louw & Nida Dictionary of Semantic Domains says of this term, “the highest council of the Jews .... ‘Sanhedrin, the council of the Jews’.” Other Greek dictionaries say, “Israelite Sanhedrin or Christian ‘Presbytery’”; “body of elders, Presbytery, senate, council”; Mounce says, “a Presbytery.” The CREC recognizes the governmental function of the broader church and we have formed seven “presbyteries” (and a Council) in order to advise and strengthen local churches with such ordination examinations.

church. If the ordination happens at Presbytery, then the congregation should “install” the minister, including a similar set of vows.<sup>12</sup>

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12 This requires a very small change to CREC Constitution, e.g., the removal of two phrases regarding recommending ordination “to the local churches,” or “to the local session,” thus leaving the matter for the prerogative of the local congregation to permit ordination at the Presbytery or at the local church.

## PROPOSED BOOK OF PROCEDURES CHANGES

### ORIGINAL

BOP XI.1.d. - "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."

### REVISED

BOP XI.1.d. - "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. In cases of hardship, when a Presbytery examination is not feasible, the congregation is to have the unordained man licensed to minister from the Presbytery before relocation and serving in pastoral duties in the following manner: a) Prior to relocation, the Presiding Minister of Presbytery will appoint a committee of three CREC elders to evaluate the unordained man for service and to advise on the ordination process. b) A licensure examination should include the ordination "Application" (Appendix B) documents (MDF, statement on views, etc.); c) The licensure committee is to conduct at least one oral examination of the candidate on biblical and doctrinal knowledge, ministry experience and skills, and the man's conformity to sound doctrine and life. (This examination may be conducted via telephone or other electronic communications means). d) The licensure committee either license the candidate or not and will report on their actions and decisions to the Presiding Minister and the congregation to which this man is being called.

### ORIGINAL

#### Article XI.2 Ordination Examinations

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 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.

### REVISED

#### Article XI.2 Ordination Process

The examination process for ordination to the office of pastor (minister/teaching elder) is divided into five steps: 1) The candidate making written application to the Presiding Minister of a Presbytery; 2) A written qualifying examination; 3) Oral examinations administered through a committee of a Presbytery; 4) Providing required papers, sermons, and other work required by the committee; 5) An oral examination administered at a Presbytery meeting, followed by vows and the laying on of hands administered by a congregation or Presbytery.

## Article XI.2.C Ordination Examinations

### ORIGINAL

#### Steps of the Ordination Examination Process

- i. A local church informs the 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 Minister appoints an Ordination Examination Committee of five to oversee the evaluation;
- 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 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.

### REVISED (under Article XI.2.C Ordination Examinations)

#### Steps of the Ordination Process

- i. **APPLICATION** - A candidate makes application to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery three to four months prior to a Presbytery meeting.
- ii. **APTITUDE**: A candidate completes the written qualifying examination proctored by a CREC elder and under the direction of the Presiding Minister.
- iii. **ASSESSMENT**: A committee (ordinarily five CREC elders, including one elder from the sending or receiving congregation of the candidate) is selected and receives the written examination, determining whether to proceed with oral examination(s) privately (oral

examinations with the committee may be conducted via telephone or other electronic means); the candidate provides to the committee all other required written work (such as pastoral case studies, exegetical papers, sermons, etc.); the candidate is examined on the floor of Presbytery.

- iv. APPROVAL: The candidate, if approved, may be ordained through the laying on of hands and vows by the local congregation or by the Presbytery.

Presbytery should report on these actions to the CREC Elder Email List and the congregation(s) involved. Further details of the process are explained in the “Guidelines and Instructions for Presbytery Ordination Exams” (Appendix B of the BOP).

#### BOP Article XII Recognition of Ordained Ministers

##### ORIGINAL BOP XII.1-3

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...

##### REVISED BOP XII [ADD section XII.4]

##### [ADD VII.4. “CREC-Approved Ministers Serving Out of Bounds”]

For the purpose of ministerial accountability, promoting more broadly the views of the CREC, building up churches in the Biblical and Reformed faith, and for faithfully growing our communion, Presbyteries may receive and recognize ordinations of ministers serving out of the bounds of CREC congregations. Ministers serving outside the CREC wishing to have their ordination recognized and received by a CREC Presbytery shall be sponsored and recommended by a CREC member church. Such ministers shall be examined by a CREC Presbytery regarding ordination status, ecclesiastical call, confessional stance, doctrine, and desire to be connected to the CREC. Upon a majority vote from Presbytery, the minister will have his ordination recognized by Presbytery, and will be recognized as a minister serving out of bounds (and thus placed the Presiding Minister’s list of ministers within the Presbytery XII.1). The minister out of bounds may be seated at Presbytery, make motions, serve on committees, give reports, but may not vote. Ordinarily the ecclesiastical body in which a minister out of bounds serves shall begin the process of forming "fraternal relations," with the respective Presbytery. A minister out of bounds may have this recognition revoked by a two-thirds vote of Presbytery.

## **PROPOSED REVISIONS OF THE CREC CONSTITUTION**



ORIGINAL

Article IV.A.2.g The Broader Assemblies

“to evaluate men for ordination and recommend or not recommend candidates to the local churches;”

REVISED

“to evaluate men for ordination and recommend or not recommend candidates for ordination\*\*\* [deletion];”

ORIGINAL

Article II.F. “Any candidate for pastor, minister, or teacher 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.”

REVISED

Article II.F. “Any candidate for pastor, minister, or teacher 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\*\*\* [deletion here]. 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.”

## REVISED APPENDIX B OF THE BOP

This applies ONLY to APPENDIX B: SECTION 3 and SECTION 5 (Examination Question) (SECTION 1, 2, and 4 ARE NOT REVISED IN THIS PROPOSAL)

### Guidelines and Instructions for Presbytery Ordination Exams

#### REVISED SECTION 3.

##### A. APPLICATION: The Application for Ordination as a Pastor in the CREC

###### Instructions

Submit a letter from the elders of the CREC congregation recommending the ordination of the candidate. Additionally, the Application should include the following: a) a one-page biography with a photo of the candidate, wife and children (if applicable), covering educational background, ministry experience, work experience, etc.; b) a completed Ministerial Data Form ([CREChurches.org](http://CREChurches.org)). Note: If the candidate is not part of a CREC congregation, he should provide a letter from other Christian leaders/elders that commend ordination. Three or four months are ordinarily required from the date of application to a Presbytery floor examination. This may be adjusted on a case by case basis. c) Provide a brief document answering the following questions:

1. Do you affirm that the Bible (autographs) is inspired by God and free from errors?
2. Do you affirm the Nicene Creed and the Definition of Chalcedon without any reservations?
3. Which Confession of Faith best defines your views of the faith? Please briefly state any exceptions to this Confession.
4. Are you willing to submit to the CREC governing documents, including submitting to your brethren of the session of your local church, the Presbytery, and Council of the CREC?
5. Do you affirm the views expressed in the CREC memorial statements? Please briefly state any exceptions to the CREC memorial statements.
6. If you are married, describe the state of your marriage.
7. If you have children, describe your relationship with your children and the aroma of your home.
8. Discuss your use of pornography, explaining your history or experience with illicit books, magazines, film, video, sexting, online dating for sexual purposes, online chatrooms, etc (if any).
9. Have you ever committed fornication/adultery with another woman or man? If so, explain.
10. Have you ever used illegal drugs, if so please explain.

###### i. Process of Ordination as a Pastor in the CREC

1. After a candidate's Application (above) is received by the Presiding Minister (PM) of a CREC Presbytery, the PM will appoint a committee chairman to oversee and evaluate the written qualifying examination.
11. If the chairman approves of the written qualifying examination, then an ordination committee, ordinarily consisting of five CREC elders (including one elder from the sending or receiving congregation of the candidate) will be selected at the discretion of the PM and committee chair.
12. The written exam will be assessed by the committee to consider whether to proceed with at least two other private oral examinations of the candidate.
13. If the committee determines to proceed, the candidate will provide to the committee with the following: a) five pastoral case studies assigned by the committee, b) two exegetical papers, working from the original languages, from biblical passages assigned by the committee, and c) any other

written work the committee deems necessary to further assess the candidate (such as a further paper on Church history, a paper or examination on an important doctrinal area, etc.).

14. If the committee determines to proceed, the candidate is to be examined on the floor of Presbytery. The Presbytery examination is to be scheduled only after the committee is satisfied that the candidate will effectively demonstrate his competency before Presbytery.
15. Since the committee has spent significant time and thought assessing the candidate, the Presbytery examination should ordinarily last no longer than two hours. This examination is to be governed by the committee, yet some time for other presbyter's questions should be allowed. The examination should include questioning the candidate in the following areas: a) the candidate's Christian experience, marriage and family, calling to ministry, and ministry experience; b) the candidate's knowledge of Scripture; c) the candidate's theological depth and views touching on orthodoxy, Reformational theology, worship and sacraments; d) the candidate's knowledge of Church history; e) the candidate's knowledge and views of pastoral matters, including church administration, leadership, preaching, and counseling.
16. After the exam, the Presbytery, will proceed to executive session in order to deliberate and vote on recommending the candidate for ordination. Following the vote the candidate is to be counseled regarding the Presbytery's decision, including recommendations to strengthen the candidate for service in the ministry.
17. If the candidate has been approved for ordination, the local congregation may schedule an ordination event or the Presbytery may immediately administer Ordination Vows and lay hands on the candidate so as to ordain him. The following vows are advised, as well as any other vows the congregation or Presbytery deem fit:
  1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
  2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confessions of your congregation as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
  3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of your congregation and the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches as in conformity with the general principles of biblical government?
  4. Do you accept the office of minister in your congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you an officer?
  5. Do you promise to submit to your brethren in the Lord, including other elders in your congregation and fellow elders in the CREC Presbytery in which reside, as well as the Council of the CREC?
  6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?
  7. The Following Declaration of Ordination should be stated by the Officiant leading this ordination, after the laying of hands of elders and prayer: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with all the elders of \_\_\_\_\_ [Presbytery or congregation]. I now pronounce and declare that [name]\_\_\_\_\_ has been ordained as agreeable to the Word of God, and according to our constitution. Therefore, he is entitled to all encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."
18. All actions of the Presbytery relating to the ordination, and any other relevant information, is to be reported to the local congregation's session.

REVISED APPENDIX B: SECTION 5  
APTITUDE: Written Qualifying Examination

Instructions: This is to be proctored and overseen by a CREC church elder. It must be completed within twelve hours, with as many breaks as needed and may be completed over the course of no more than three days. It is a “closed book” exam without a Bible, notes, etc. Each of these answers should be as succinct as possible and no more than two paragraphs should be written for any one answer. Note the key terms: list, outline, discuss, define, and defend. List means a simple list of terms or names (e.g., List judges... Answer: “Sampson, . . .”). Outline requires a structured list with biblical references (at least book and chapter). Define means provide a simple statement of the view or doctrine. Discuss requires at least a sentence in which some definition of terms and differences are compared. Defend requires identifying a view and reasoning to it from Scripture.

**BIBLE**

1. List the books of the Minor Prophets in order.
19. List the New Testament books in order beginning with Titus through Revelation.
20. List at least five different types of literature found in the Bible.
21. Outline the course of events recorded in the following Old Testament book with chapter references \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
22. List the ten commandments in order.
23. List five judges from the book of Judges.
24. List five categories of sacrifices in the Old Testament.
25. Discuss the circumstances around:
  1. The division of the kingdom.
  2. The exile of Judah.
26. Provide a sermon outline from a passage in the Old Testament book of \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
27. Briefly outline the lives of these three Old Testament figures \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
28. Defend your view of Genesis 1-2 (e.g., literal, 24-hour a day, six day creation or another view?).
29. List the key themes/verses in the following five Psalms \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
30. List the Prophets who ministered during this era \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
31. List passages where the Resurrection is taught in the Old Testament.
32. Outline the following five Old Testament books \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).  
Include comments on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.
33. Outline the following five New Testament books \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).  
Include comments on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.
34. Discuss the occasion for the Jerusalem council.
35. List the churches addressed in Revelation.
36. List biblical references (at least book and chapter) that address the following:
  1. Wealth
  2. Baptism
  3. The Millennium
  4. Christian liberty
  5. Adultery
  6. Homosexuality
  7. Remarriage
  8. Church attendance/membership
  9. Tithing
  10. Church discipline
37. List biblical references you would use to explain and defend the following:

1. The authority of Scripture
  2. The Trinity
  3. Total depravity
  4. Predestination (election and reprobation)
  5. Limited atonement
  6. Justification by faith alone
  7. The continued importance and use of the Law for believers.
  8. Regeneration
  9. Covenant theology
  10. The Eucharist
38. List biblical references that address the following:
1. The good Samaritan
  2. Fruit of the Spirit
  3. Spiritual gifts
  4. The summary of the law
  5. The Beatitudes
  6. The Parable of the Prodigal son
  7. Nicodemus
  8. Peter's confession, "you are the Christ"
  9. The whole armor of God
  10. Qualifications for church officers
39. State the main theme of the following five New Testament chapters \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
40. Defend your view of the dating of the Gospels.
41. Defend your view of the dating of the book of Revelation.
42. Give the book and the chapter location for each of these biblical citations:
1. "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face..."
  2. "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone..."
  3. "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring ..."
  4. "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this..."
  5. "In the year that King Uzziah died..."
  6. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked..."
  7. "My sheep hear my voice..."
  8. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus..."
  9. "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists..."
  10. "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..."

### **BIBLIOLOGY & APOLOGETICS**

43. Define textual criticism.
44. Defend your view of the Biblical Text and the Text tradition to which you adhere.
45. Discuss the doctrine of sola Scriptura and how it relates to Church councils/creeds.
46. Discuss the following properties of Scripture: inspiration, authority, perspicuity, infallibility, and inerrancy.
47. Defend your view of apologetics, touching on classical/evidentialism, fideism, and presuppositionalism.
48. How would you respond to an unbeliever asking for you to prove the existence of God?

### **THEOLOGY**

49. List at least ten of God's attributes and identify whether they are communicable or incommunicable attributes.
50. Defend the doctrine of the Trinity.

51. Discuss the economical Trinity and the ontological Trinity.
52. Defend your view of the issue of the “eternal subordination” of the Son to the Father.
53. Define the Creator/creature distinction.
54. Discuss the issue of the analogical vs the univocal use of language between God and man.
55. Defend your view of the “covenant of works” (also called the “covenant of life”).
56. List each of the biblical covenants with Scripture references.
57. Define dispensationalism.
58. Define covenant theology.
59. Defend your view of the sovereignty of God and the free will of mankind.
60. Defend your view of the “Five Points of Calvinism.”
61. Defend your view of the doctrine of election, answering can an “elect” person go to hell?
62. Discuss Christ’s divinity and humanity, describing His person(s) and nature(s).
63. Define justification.
64. Defend your view of “final justification” (e.g., Rom. 2:13ff).
65. How are believers sanctified?
66. Discuss angels in Scripture with references.
67. What and who is Satan?

### **HISTORY, ECCLESIOLOGY, AND POLITY**

68. Discuss the following five events/figures in Church history \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).
69. List the first five ecumenical councils with dates.
70. List five important Reformed Confessions (not Catechisms) with dates in their historical order.
71. List the historical views of church government.
72. Defend your view of the similarities/differences between a minister/pastor and other elders.
73. Defend your view of whether women may serve as deaconesses.
74. Defend your view of spiritual gifts (including “sign-gifts) in the Church today.
75. List the governing documents of the CREC.
76. List the current presbyteries of the CREC.
77. Discuss some key differences between the government of the CREC and that of Presbyterian denominations (e.g., the PCA or OPC, etc.).
78. Define the two broader assemblies in the CREC and how they are constituted.
79. Discuss the government of the CREC as an assimilation of major polities.
80. What disciplinary measures can CREC presbyteries or the Council take?
81. What are some of the key positions defining the CREC in the Book of Memorials?
82. List some key areas addressed in the CREC Book of Procedures.
83. Since the CREC government/polity is a work in progress, what are some directions for improvement?

### **WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS**

84. Define the “regulative principle of worship.”
85. Define “covenant renewal worship.”
86. Define the sacraments.
87. What happens to a person in baptism?
88. Defend your position on the recipients of baptism.
89. Defend your position on the mode of baptism.
90. Defend your position on the proper recipients of the Eucharist.
91. Defend your view of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

### **ESCHATOLOGY**

92. Discuss “new creation” and the future, touching on the Resurrection of believers.
93. Defend your view of hell against other views.
94. What happens to a believer at death?

95. List the well-known millennial and tribulational views.
96. Define preterism.
97. Defend your view of the Olivet Discourse.
98. Defend your specific view of the “end times” (e.g., millennium, tribulation, rapture, etc.).

### **ETHICS**

99. Should abortion ever be permitted, if so in what circumstances?
100. Defend your view of capital punishment.
101. Discuss the ethics of “in vitro fertilization.”
102. Defend your view of divorce and remarriage.
103. Discuss your response to a church member identifying as “gay.”
104. How should Federal or State governments address homosexuals who desire to marry?
105. Discuss your response to a church member whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with his/her birth sex.
106. Discuss your view of war and/or armed conflict.
107. What steps should one take to avoid plagiarism in ministry?
108. What steps would you take if you discovered that an 18-year old person or older in your congregation engaged in sexual activity with a person under 18 years old.

### **PASTORAL**

109. What are the pastor's primary calling and duties?
110. Discuss your purpose and method in preaching.
111. What are the main issues in our culture today that must be addressed from the pulpit?
112. Defend your view of pastoral counseling.
113. Discuss pastoral confidentiality.
114. What safeguards do you believe should be in place when counseling a woman?
115. What is your view of the working relationship between a minister and the elders?
116. What is your vision/mission for the congregation/ministry you will serve?

### **ORIGINAL 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.

[THEN 50 QUESTIONS FOLLOW]

### **REVISED Sample Questions for the Oral Examination**

Ordination Examination Committees should highlight in the Presbytery examination the candidate’s knowledge in a summary manner. So, it is appropriate to ask for facts (recite the ten commandments) and

definitions (define the doctrine of the Trinity). However Committees are advised to advance to more in-depth questions in the process of oral examinations and the Presbytery floor exam. The following questions are examples of the kinds of questions that could move a candidate to deeper applications about the teachings of Scripture, theological views, and enable him to express his pastoral aptitudes and abilities as he formulates his answers.

[THE QUESTIONS BELOW ARE SELECTED FROM THE PREVIOUS LIST OF 50]

1. Trace the theme of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bible (e.g., water, mountains, seed/fruit, trees, the number 7, music, marriage, sheep and shepherds, etc.).
117. 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?
118. 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?
119. 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?
120. 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?
121. A friend attends one of your services and then complains, "Your church doesn't believe in the Holy Spirit. It doesn't look anything like the early church in Acts 2!" How would you respond?
122. 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?
123. 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?  
"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?
124. 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?
125. 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?



## The Candidate's Required Work for the Examination Committee

1) Five pastoral case studies \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned). A pastoral case study should returned as a 1000 word response to address a pastoral problem or situation, such as the example below.

Example of a pastoral case study:

Situation: After joining the church and attending faithfully for several years, a older divorced man is nominated to serve as a deacon, having demonstrated a real commitment to practical service to the body. However, his personal situation and interpersonal interactions with members of the congregation have made several people uncomfortable enough to voice their concerns to the session prior to his nomination. He frequently puts his hands on the arms or shoulders of various women, he is highly opinionated and often raises his voice awkwardly in otherwise normal conversations. He regularly seeks out young girls to talk to and cultivate relationships with, and has been observed wandering around the church alone with them. His financial situation is generally poor, with occasional lurches into being desperate, although he has never asked the church for financial assistance.

Evaluation: What issues do you see that would need to be addressed? How does his behavior comport with the biblical standards for a deacon? Is he behaving sinfully in any way? What passages of Scripture would guide your thinking in this situation? Would these issues lead you to approach him even if he were not an officer candidate? etc.

2) The candidate should provide at least two recorded sermons along with an outline of the sermon preached.

3) The candidate should provide two exegetical papers at least one month before a Presbytery examination. The committee may permit the candidate to turn in previously written papers, so long as they follow the Guidelines below.

An exegetical paper on the following Old Testament passage: \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).

An exegetical paper on the following New Testament passage: \_\_\_\_\_ (to be assigned).

### Guidelines for an Exegetical Paper

1. The paper is to be no more than 5000 words (sent to the chairman in PDF format, if possible).
2. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the candidate's scholarship and ability with the original languages of Scripture.
3. Instructions: the candidate should do the following: a) employ at least ten different scholarly sources, to be cited in footnotes (not endnotes) with at least three different citations per page; b) cite lexicons, commentaries, journal articles, specialized books on the subject, books on manners and customs, etc. c); the paper should provide comments on the relation of the passage to the larger book and other books by the same biblical writer (e.g., Mosaic literature, Pauline literature or Johannine literature). It should denote the genre of literature, the subtexts (or background texts, if any) which may be alluded to by the biblical writer, explaining any hermeneutical issues relevant for the interpretation (e.g., typology, Hebraicism, hyperbole, apocalyptic language, key terms, puns, translation or textual issues, etc.). d) The paper should introduce the importance of the passage and its possible interpretations, as well as provide an in-depth exegetical argument for the conclusion. e) The paper should show the relevance of the passage for the Church today.

# Supplementary Material 9

## Council Business/Action Item 27 (PENDING REFERRAL)

*The proposed action here, as above, is simply to register this overture as having been presented and read. This reading will be included pending referral from Knox.*

### **First Reading of a Proposed Overture on Abuse (Presented by Trinity Reformed Church to Knox Presbytery and Council 2017)**

#### A Pastoral Statement on Abuse

What is “abuse”?

While sin is always an abuse of God’s goodness, His creation, and other men and women made in the image of God, we understand and define here “abuse” as the chronic, intentional, hard-hearted verbal, sexual, or physical assault of another human being. Over time, some people demonstrate a hardness of heart that refuses to truly repent of certain forms of hatred, malice, and cruelty that manifest themselves in verbal, sexual, and/or physical violence. This treatment often occurs in the context of relationships of trust between a person in authority or with greater physical strength and someone under authority or with lesser physical strength. Rather than building up, strengthening, and glorifying, this misuse of trust and authority degrades, humiliates, and defrauds another person of his/her dignity and moral responsibility. On the other hand, sensitivity to abuse has also created the opportunity for people in relatively weaker positions to falsely accuse those in relatively stronger positions. False accusations of abuse are themselves also abusive.

The Bible often associates the following sins with patterns of abuse: angry outbursts, revenge, lust, sensuality, envy, greed, lies, treachery, drunkenness, arrogance, grumbling, and bitterness (2 Tim. 3:1-9, James 4:1-10, 2 Pet. 2:1-22, Jude 3-16). In short, what we mean by abuse is not derived from the world's use of the term. We define it as anything that bears a spiritual kinship to the kind of abuse that was thrown at Christ on the cross. “And those passing by were *hurling abuse* at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!”” (Mark 15:29–30, NASB)

Biblical examples of this behavior include:

Laban’s mistreatment of Jacob (Gen. 29-31). Jacob was an employee and aspiring son-in-law who was the victim of Laban’s ongoing, long-term lies and changed wages, all in the context familial bonds. Jacob eventually fled from Laban’s abuse under the blessing of God.

Potiphar’s wife’s false accusation of Joseph (Gen. 39). Joseph was in a subordinate position in Potiphar’s house as a servant but with regard to Potiphar’s wife was viewed as being in a relatively stronger position as a man. Joseph was the victim of false accusations of sexual

aggression by Potiphar's wife. And though Joseph fled, he was sentenced to prison, and suffered there under the blessing of God.

Pharaoh's affliction of the children of Israel in Egypt (Ex. 1-14). Pharaoh treated Israel harshly, including deprivation of straw for making bricks, accusations of laziness, angry threats, and murderous violence to their children. This was persistent, even though Pharaoh promised to change or free Israel numerous times. Eventually, Israel left Egypt under the blessing of God.

Saul's persecution of David (1 Sam. 18-28). Saul's intense jealousy of David led to angry and violent outbursts against David, followed by periods of professed remorse and depression. Nevertheless, over time, David fled from Saul and remained out of his reach all under the blessing of God.

False teachers of the New Testament (2 Tim. 3, 2 Pet. 2:1-22, Jude 3-16). Paul warns Timothy about certain teachers who will be "abusive," who have "the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" and "who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions" (2 Tim. 3:1-9). Paul says to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" concerning these things (2 Tim. 4:2) and he admonishes Titus to warn these sorts of divisive people twice and then have nothing more to do with them (Tit. 3:10).

#### 1. The Image of God, dignity, moral agency, and responsibility

We affirm that all human beings are made in the image of God, supplying each one with equal dignity, value, and worth, which is to be received with thankfulness, respect, and joy. We affirm that the just and gracious treatment of other people is used by God to make them stronger, wiser, and enabled to use their gifts and abilities with greater freedom. We affirm that the Bible calls this love. We deny that it is ever right for a man or woman to be degraded through violent words or actions.

We affirm that this "respect" and "degradation" are to be defined by the Word of God in its entirety. We deny that autonomous man has the right to define these standards by popular opinion, psychological consensus, or subjective feelings.

We affirm that every individual is morally responsible for their own actions, including victims and perpetrators. We deny that any sin or assault may be blamed on God, circumstances, or another person.

#### 2. Significant Sin but not unique or impervious to grace

We affirm that cruel, malicious, and violent words and actions are truly destructive, bearing long-lasting consequences to everyone involved. We deny that the destruction of abuse is so unique or harmful that perpetrators or victims are beyond the reach of the healing grace of Christ.

We deny that "demonizing" perpetrators or "deifying" victims is helpful for healing or arriving at true justice. We affirm that the truth of sin, the truth of the cross of Jesus, and the truth of God's final justice in Heaven and Hell are truths that set people free from the bondage of all guilt, shame, pain, and fear.

We deny that human vengeance works the righteousness of God. We affirm that vengeance is the Lord's and He will repay all evil, either in the cross of Jesus or in Hell forever. We also affirm the civil magistrate's God-given duty to deal out God's justice in this world, punishing evildoers and rewarding those who do good, according to the standards of Scripture. We affirm that it is possible to find true peace in God through Jesus Christ in this life despite the horrors of abuse, injustice in the courts, or lies and deception that do not provide enough evidence for proper convictions. We affirm that this peace will be fully realized at the Last Judgment and the Resurrection of the Just.

### 3. The Gospel *for* Victims vs. The Gospel *of* Victims

We affirm that there is only one fully innocent victim of abuse in the history of the world and His name is Jesus Christ. We affirm that many others have endured undeserved and evil treatment but never as sinless victims. We affirm that victims must be defended from all false accusations, false guilt, and false shame. But we deny that it is helpful to refuse to address true sin, true guilt, and true shame in victims wherever it arises, though we certainly affirm that this must be done with great care.

We affirm that the source of healing, freedom, and joy for all abuse victims is found in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We affirm that by His stripes, all may be healed. We affirm that the abuse He received and the death He suffered was in solidarity with all sinners and all who suffer under the pain of sin and who place their trust in Him. We deny that there is any true peace or joy or healing apart from entrusting all suffering to Him.

We deny that evaluating abusive situations and attendant suffering is simple or easy. We deny that any two abusive situations are completely alike. Furthermore, we deny that there is only one way to handle very similar situations. We affirm that suffering cruelty and injustice may sometimes be fled under the blessing of God and may sometimes be endured under the blessing of God. We also affirm that people may flee suffering in sinful and bitter ways, and likewise, people may endure suffering in sinful and bitter ways. We also affirm that all wicked perpetrators who repent and turn to Christ will end up in Heaven, while all victims of abuse who cling to their own pain and bitterness and who refuse to turn to Christ will never escape their suffering.

We affirm that childlike faith in Jesus Christ is all that is necessary for salvation. We affirm that this salvation in Jesus Christ includes healing for every form of pain, shame, guilt, and fear. We affirm that confession of sin and forgiveness for the sake of Christ do truly set captives free, cleanse all shame, and heal broken hearts. We deny that apologies calculated to appease hurt feelings accomplishes gospel healing.

### 4. Friends, Counselors, and Pastors

We affirm that God created people for community, including families, marriage, friendship, the Church, and other natural associations. We affirm that these bonds of trust and love are intended by God to create the kind of mutual dependence that respects, honors, and glorifies individual

gifts, talents, and responsibilities. We affirm that in a fallen world these bonds of trust and love are often twisted, becoming means of manipulation, vengeance, cruelty, and great harm.

We deny that good intentions are sufficient for providing true help in difficult circumstances, and therefore even well-meaning friends can sometimes perpetuate unhelpful patterns of sinful dependency. We affirm that all true, gospel help strengthens individuals to take responsibility for their own choices, learning to evaluate their past, present, and future by the cross of Jesus.

We affirm the natural goodness of friendships, family, and specialized vocations in counseling, especially when these individuals are Christians who know Christ and obey His Word. Nevertheless, we deny that these forms of community and friendship can replace the work of pastors and elders, who have been given the task of watching over the souls of God's people. While we affirm that wise pastors will seek wisdom from many counselors, we deny that abuse and its attendant consequences fall beyond the scope or authority of ordinary Christian ministry.

## 5. The Sufficiency of Scripture

Finally, we affirm that the Bible is sufficient for dealing with the sins of cruelty, malice, violence, lust, lies, and anything else that the Bible recognizes as abuse. We also affirm that the same God who speaks in Scripture also speaks in the natural, created order. Nevertheless, because of the sinfulness of mankind, we deny that natural revelation is sufficient for curing the effects of sin.

We affirm that the Bible teaches the equal dignity of male and female in creation and in redemption. We deny that this equal dignity is in anyway set aside by the glorious hierarchy that God has ordained in marriage between a man and his wife, in a family between parents and children, and in the many other relationships of authority and subordination (e.g. employer and employee, magistrate and citizen, teacher and student, pastor and congregant, etc.). We affirm that where God gives authority, He also gives responsibility, and when any authority is used to harm subordinates, it would be better for a millstone to be tied around their neck and drowned in the sea than to cause those under their care to stumble.

We affirm that the Bible teaches the unique glory of the image of God in woman. We affirm that she is the glory of man and that she was created to be honored and protected as the weaker vessel. We affirm that this honoring and protecting is designed by God to ordinarily come through wise and godly fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. We also affirm that every woman is responsible before God for her own words, actions, choices, and responses. We deny that the relative weakness of a woman means that she must not cultivate a godly and feminine strength. We affirm that biblical femininity may sometimes include godly deception, physical and even lethal force, as well as bold confrontation.

We affirm that the Bible teaches that the glory of men is their strength and this strength is given by God to be used sacrificially for the protection and honor of all others. We affirm that God has given particular men to the Church to lead and govern and protect the flock of God, under the oversight of Jesus Christ the Chief Shepherd. We affirm that older women should teach younger women to grow in holiness and wisdom, to love and obey their husbands, to love making home,

to love the fruitfulness of children, and to be industrious in every way, adorning the gospel of Christ. We deny that the calling of men to lead and care for the people of God as pastors is in any way a handicap for women or children who have suffered abuse. Rather, we affirm that God has ordained male authority in the Church for the blessing of His people.