

CREC Council Book of Procedures

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Article I. Preface

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

Article II. Definitions

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

1. Adopt

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

2. Mediation

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

3. Non-binding Arbitration

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

4. Present

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

5. Ratify

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

6. Receive

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

Article III. Procedure for Receiving New Members into Presbytery

- 1.** The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The delegates can make motions but cannot vote.
- 2.** Delegates about to become new members shall normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.).
- 3.** When admitting a new church into membership in the CREC, the Presiding Minister shall ask the following questions of the church’s delegation:
 - a)** Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to take hold on eternal life, to which you called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses?
 - b)** Do you, with all the officers of your church, wholeheartedly and willingly acknowledge before God that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
 - c)** Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive, adopt and believe the Doctrinal Standards of your church (apart from declared exceptions), as a faithful interpretation of the teaching of the Word of God?
 - d)** Do you, with all the officers of your church, pay careful attention to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood?
 - e)** Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Communion: to keep with them the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to pray for them, to comfort them, to encourage them, to

admonish them, and to rule with them in accordance with the Constitution of this Communion and in full submission to the Word of God?

4. When affirmative answers have been given, the Presiding Minister will then read the following statement, and then ask the delegates of all member churches to signify their agreement with a corporate “amen.”

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

Article IV. Mission Churches

1. Purpose

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

2. Definitions

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

3. Procedure

a) Mission Church

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

- i. A constitution has been written to define and govern the mission work.
 - (1) The mother church approves the constitution and doctrinal standards of the mission church (which may or may not be identical to the mother church’s).
 - (2) The mother church appoints a session *pro tempore* over the mission church.
 - (3) These actions put the mission church into existence.
- ii. Under this constitution and session *pro tempore*:
 - (1) New members can be received.
 - (2) The mission’s constitution may be modified by its own amendment process.
 - (3) New officers may be examined, ordained and installed.

b) The Session

- i. The session *pro tempore* of the mission church shall be composed of all or some designated part of the session of the mother church along with any duly elected and installed pastors/elders of the mission church until the rest of the conditions for particularization have been fulfilled.
- ii. The session *pro tempore* shall not be the session of the mother church, but only the session of the mission church.
- iii. Upon the particularization of a church, the pastors/elders from the mother church who had been assigned to serve *pro tempore* on the mission church’s session shall no longer be members of the new session. However, should the new church deem it useful, these former session members may continue to serve in an *ex-officio* capacity for a season.

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

c) Conditions for Particularization

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

d) Relationship to the CREC

- i. All mission churches of CREC member churches shall automatically have mission status in the CREC.
- ii. This mission status may be maintained until the mission is particularized.
- iii. Once conditions are met for particularization, the mission church shall be eligible for full CREC membership at the next CREC presbytery meeting.
- iv. As extensions of a member CRE church, all mission churches shall meet the constitutional and doctrinal requirements of the CREC.
- v. As extensions of a member CREC church, all mission churches shall have the protection of the CREC courts and other CREC constitutional protections and requirements.

e) Ordination of Teaching and Ruling Elders

- i. As the daughter church is under the oversight of the mother church (a CREC member), all ordination exams shall be conducted under the oversight of the mother church and according to CREC guidelines.
- ii. The actual ordination and installation of officers shall be conducted under the oversight of the mission church session *pro tempore*.

f) Termination of Relationship

- i. Termination of the relationship between mother and daughter church can happen in two ways:
 - (1) The daughter church becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership;
 - (2) A decision by the mother church's session to terminate the relationship.

g) Visits

- i. It is recommended that representatives of the mother church visit the mission church on a regular basis (perhaps quarterly), sometimes to conduct meetings or worship, and sometimes to observe.
- ii. It is also recommended that the mission church cover the expenses of the mother church (e.g., travel and honorarium).

Article V. Election of Presiding Ministers

1. All nominations for the position of Presiding Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. Churches wishing to nominate candidates for the position of Presiding Minister or Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall submit their nominations to the Presiding Minister at least thirty days in advance of the opening of the meeting.
2. Following the election of a Presiding Minister, the delegates may nominate candidates for the office of Presiding Minister *pro tempore*. The nominees need not be limited to the delegates nominated for the office of Presiding Minister.
3. The Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall be elected according to the procedure delineated in Article IV.C of the CREC Constitution.
4. Election of Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore*
 - a) If there are no nominations pre-posted on the agenda, the Presiding Minister shall receive nominations from the floor from any delegate in order to create a roster of candidates.
 - b) In order for a nominee to be recognized as a candidate his nomination must be seconded on the floor and the nominee must express his consent to be a candidate. The nomination and second may not come from two delegates representing the same church.
 - c) In due time, the Presiding Minister will close the nominations and identify the candidates. A motion from the floor to close nominations shall require a two-thirds vote.
 - d) The Presiding Minister will open discussion about the candidates. Delegates may use this time to ask questions of the candidates or elicit statements from them. Delegates also may speak for or against any candidate.
 - e) A roll call vote will be taken unless by majority vote or at the Presiding Minister's discretion, a vote by ballot is requested. The candidate receiving a majority of votes will be elected Presiding Minister. The outgoing Presiding Minister will tally the votes and then shall declare the results of the election.
 - f) If there is only one candidate, he must receive at least a two-thirds majority of the assembled delegate votes to fill the position of Presiding Minister. In elections with more than one candidate, a candidate must receive the votes of more than 50% of the delegates present and voting to become Presiding Minister-elect. If no candidate meets this requirement, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and another vote taken. In the event of a tie vote between two candidates, the Presiding Minister will break the tie, if necessary, to elect a Presiding Minister or eliminate a candidate from the ballot.

Article VI. Conduct of Meetings

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

Article VII. Formation of New Presbyteries

1. Specifications
 - a) Future proposals to form new presbyteries in the CREC shall, to the greatest extent feasible, conform to these Guidelines:

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

- i.** The optimum size of a presbytery in the CREC shall be ten churches;
- ii.** When a presbytery exceeds a membership of twenty churches, it shall begin taking steps to propose to Council the formation of a new presbytery, except as, after giving due consideration to the existing condition and strength of its constituent churches, the presbytery deems it unwise to propose division at that time. In this case, presbytery shall report said decision to Council;
- iii.** The factors to be considered in forming new presbyteries shall include the following:
 - (1)** to the extent feasible, each new presbytery should contain at least ten churches;
 - (2)** each new presbytery should include members that have long ministerial experience (graybeards);
 - (3)** each new presbytery should contain members that have a good working acquaintance with CREC culture;
 - (4)** each new presbytery should contain some churches of significant size (not all small churches);
 - (5)** the churches of each new presbytery should share geographic proximity, and have historic connections to one another;
 - (6)** the preference of international churches (and domestic churches if circumstances warrant), should be given significant weight when assigning them to a particular presbytery.
- a)** Newly formed presbyteries will be named on the model of Anselm and Augustine, that is, after figures from Church history.
- b)** Each new presbytery shall, within one year of its formation, publish on its web page a brief biography of the saint for which it is named.

Article VIII. Notification of Presiding Ministers

- 1.** The session of elders of each CREC church shall notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery under the following circumstances:
 - a)** Before formally admonishing a minister (pastor) or elder (formal admonishment consists of an act of the session, entered into the minutes and delivered to the minister or elder verbally or in writing).
 - b)** Before dismissing a minister (pastor) or elder or calling for his resignation.
- 2.** Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall report to the Presiding Minister of Council the same information.

Article IX. Procedures for Conducting a Presbytery Trial

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

3. The Presiding Minister (or his designee) charges the parties, witnesses, and the judicatory from the Scriptures, and then opens the hearing with prayer.
4. Presentation of Complainant's case
 - a) The Complainant calls a witness, directs him by questioning, and members of the judicatory may follow up with questions of their own.
 - b) The witness may then be examined by the Respondent, followed by another invitation to questions from the judicatory.
 - c) If the Complainant wishes to redirect the witness, he may do so, but the same opportunities for follow-up questions must be provided.
 - d) The Complainant may present any documentary or physical evidence during the course of his presentation. When the Complainant concludes his presentation, the judicatory may again pose final questions to the Complainant or to any of his witnesses.
5. At this point, any member of the judicatory may interject a motion to dismiss the case. If the motion carries by a three-fourths majority, the hearing will end and the matter will be regarded as settled.
6. Presentation of Respondent's Case
 - a) Respondent's presentation is patterned after the Complainant's presentation as described above.
7. The Presiding Minister invites the judicatory to ask any further questions of any available witness.
8. Deliberation and Judgment
 - a) Deliberation begins with prayer. Judgment requires a simple majority of the judicatory. Minority opinions, if formally offered, must be received into the record.
9. Closing prayer is offered by the Presiding Minister or his designee.

Article X. Procedures for Appealing Decisions

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

Article XI. Ordination in the CREC

The ordination process is a collaborative one, whereby the local church and the presbytery work together to evaluate a man's readiness for the gospel ministry. The first stage requires the local church to evaluate the man's character, family life, and gifts, making use of a variety of means, including adequate outside input from those who have known him and his family, as well as direct observation of his pastoral gifts and temperament. Once that threshold has been cleared, the local church can move forward with asking the presbytery to examine the man regarding his biblical knowledge and doctrinal orthodoxy, which is their primary domain. After the presbytery exam, and if the man receives the recommendation of the presbytery, the local church should receive that recommendation as a part of their overall evaluation of the man. When both the local church's positive evaluation of the man's character, family life, gifts, and temperament, combined with the presbytery's positive evaluation of the man's knowledge and doctrinal soundness come together, only then should the man be ordained to the gospel ministry.

While the CREC permits a variety of views of the offices, the ministerial ordination process stands in the mainstream of the Church's orthopraxy. The Church has historically recognized an ordained class of stewards serving the household of God (Titus 1:7). The New Testament speaks of "pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11) who were set apart for service. For example, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14, Authorized Version).

The New Testament speaks of "servants" or "ministers" of the Church (diakonos) such as Paul, Timothy, Epaphras, and Tychicus (Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:7). While the New Testament uses the term "elder" synonymously with "bishop" or "overseer" and both of these "pastor" (Acts 20:17-28), this class of officers includes distinctions of those who "rule" and those who "labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:17-4:2). For example, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17, Authorized Version). Ministers of the Word represent the Lord in proclaiming His will in the public preaching of the Word and in leading in the administration of the sacraments.

Reformed congregations have often recognized three types of pastoral call, requiring ordination examination: Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor. Those called as Pastors and Associate Pastors are affirmed or elected by the congregation in the same process as other elders and are voting members of the session of elders. Those called as Assistant Pastors are called by the session of elders, rather than the congregation and are not members of the session.

1. The Nature of Ordination

- a) The ordination of a pastor or minister is the act of conferring and confirming ministerial gifts (1 Tim. 4:14). The "laying on of hands" imparts a spiritual gift for ministerial service (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). The process implies the evaluation of qualifications and competencies for ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Eph. 4:11). The pattern established in the Scriptures is that the minister is to commit the faith to faithful men who will teach others and so pass on the faith and build up the Church (2 Tim. 2:1-2).
- b) The presbytery examination process is designed to evaluate the ministerial competence of the candidate through direct examination and the testimony of the congregation(s) in which the candidate received training (i.e., internship). A minister ordained to serve God's flock must possess the necessary character and skills along with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in the Scriptures in order to adequately fulfill his calling. He must be able to feed Christ's sheep (John 21:15-17), convict those who oppose the faith (2 Tim. 2:24-26), shepherd God's people (1 Pet. 5:1-4), and make a good confession before men (1 Tim. 6:12).
- c) The examination process is intentionally demanding. When a candidate has passed the examination, the value of the ordination is increased for everyone involved. When a man is examined and approved by the broader church, several benefits flow from that process that will better equip him for his public life of service to Christ and His Church. This process seeks to protect the Church by holding back those who are not sufficiently gifted, called, and trained to shepherd God's people. When a presbytery approves a man, it inspires confidence in the candidate, in the local church, in the broader church, and in those outside the Church.

2. Ministerial Examination, Ordination, Installation, and Call

The terms used here are defined as follows: A "call" is the specific terms of service of a pastor to a congregation, not unlike a contract for an employee in many respects. It sets at least the following terms: remuneration, benefits, and the terms of assessment. An example of a call document is an Exhibit in Appendix B. The examination regards the entire process of assessing a man's competencies for service prior to ordination; ordination is the conferring of the status of ministerial office through vows, the laying on of hands and prayer; installation is the acceptance of a specific ministerial obligation of service through vows, the laying on of hands and prayer; the ordination (proper) is to happen in the context of the local church to which

he is called. When possible a delegation from the presbytery is to participate in the ordination; installation is the acceptance of a specific ministerial obligation of service through vows, the laying on of hands and prayer.

- a) The process of examination is facilitated through an ordination examination committee (hereafter, “committee”) ordinarily composed of five, but no less than three CREC elders with a majority of members being ordained ministers. The same committee may serve for multiple men within a set period of time (e.g., for one year as an ad hoc committee).
- b) A congregation wishing to call a previously un-ordained man should have the candidate successfully complete the presbytery examination process before assuming pastoral duties. This examination may take place in the sending presbytery (in which the candidate is located) or the receiving presbytery (to which the candidate is being called). Exceptions to this requirement may be authorized by the presbytery by direct action or through the presiding minister (Constitution IV.A.2.g and IV.C.7).
- c) A candidate may begin to undergo the examination process prior to a call from a congregation so as to commend the man for consideration in CREC congregations. A candidate undergoing examination prior to a call may not be examined on the floor of presbytery, nor ordained until he has accepted a call. A successful candidate who has been approved prior to a call is a “licentiate.” He is licensed by a representative committee of presbytery to preach, teach, and minister under the authority of the local session. Presbyteries are to accept such approved examinations of other (CREC) presbyteries with regard to the fitness of a candidate and knowledge but may examine a candidate with regard to his views. Exceptions may be authorized by the presbytery by direct action or through the presiding minister (Constitution IV.A.2.g and IV.C.7).
- d) When a candidate is being called to a congregation, the presbytery should inquire of the local session as to the adequacy of the candidate’s compensation package (salary, housing, insurance, etc.) and make recommendations to the local congregation, if needed. The committee should also inquire on matters relating to taxation and benefits, such as a non-taxable “housing allowance” and advise the candidate and church.

3. Examination Materials, Specifications, and Details

Related documents and specifications are provided in Appendix B: Ministerial Examination, Ordination, and Related Matters.

4. Steps of the Ordination Process: Application, Aptitude, Assessment, Approval, Acknowledgement

- a) Application - A church should commend a candidate and make application to a PM of presbytery (sending or receiving presbytery) at least three months prior to a scheduled presbytery meeting (see Appendix B).
- b) Aptitude - The chairman of the committee provides the candidate with the written qualifying examination prepared for the candidate (see Appendix B). The committee reviews the completed written examination to determine if the candidate is to proceed. If the committee does not deem it so, then they may make recommendations to the candidate for further preparation and to retake the examination at a later time.
- c) Assessment - The committee assesses the candidate through at least two private, oral examinations (which may be done telephonically), and assigns other work and assesses it. The candidate is to provide all other required work such as pastoral case studies, exegetical papers, sermons, etc., at least one month prior to presbytery. If approved and the man lacks a call, the committee will deem him licensed in the CREC. If approved and called, the candidate is to be examined in a public presbytery meeting.
- d) Approval - The presbytery examination is to be scheduled only after the man is called and after the committee is satisfied the candidate will effectively demonstrate competency before presbytery. The presbytery examination is to be led by the committee and should last no longer than two hours. The candidate is to be examined in the following areas: 1) Christian experience, marriage and family, calling and ministry experience; 2) knowledge of Scripture; 3) theological depth and views touching on Christian orthodoxy, Reformational theology, worship and sacraments; 4) knowledge of Church history; and 5) knowledge and views of pastoral matters, including church administration, polity, ethics, leadership, preaching, and counseling (see Appendix B). Some time for other presbyters’ questions may be allowed in this public examination.
- e) Acknowledgement - Immediately after a man is approved in a presbytery exam, presbytery is to move into executive session with the candidate being dismissed during deliberation. Ordinarily, the committee is to move that the candidate be recommended for ordination. After sufficient discussion the presbytery will vote on the committee’s motion and

approve or disapprove the candidate for ordination by majority vote. If approved, the candidate is to be ordained in a ceremony at the local congregation, as soon as possible (see suggested vows in Appendix B). The committee will report presbytery's actions to the session of the local congregation from which he was sent, if applicable, and to which he is called.

5. Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

- a) The CREC accepts the ordination of ministers outside of the CREC, because we believe in the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Yet, it is both wise and proper for those previously ordained to have their credentials examined. The aim in examining a transferring minister is to assist the local congregation in confirming orthodoxy and competence.
- b) When the church desires to call a man to the office of pastor who was ordained outside of the CREC or who is not a minister in the CREC, the elders of the church should inform the Presiding Minister. The Presiding Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination by appointing a commission (acting on behalf of presbytery) or a committee (who will report to Presbytery) composed of at least three CREC presbyters.
- c) The commission will provide a report of its decision and any other recommendations to the Presiding Minister of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the commission recommends the call of the minister, the church may proceed with the call. At the next Presbytery, the minister will then be received into the CREC as an ordained minister with a report from the commission and an opportunity for a brief examination (on views) on the floor of the presbytery meeting. If the session determines to proceed with the call against the recommendation of the commission, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to see if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3.

Article XII. Recognition of Ordained Ministers

1. Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall establish and maintain a list of the CREC ministers (pastors) in their presbytery.
2. The purpose of the lists of CREC ministers is simply to clarify who is formally recognized as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel in the CREC. It does not mean that the man is a member of presbytery or council, or a delegate to presbytery or council. Removing a man's credentials from such a register is not equivalent to defrocking, which can only be done in the CREC at the local church level.
3. The lists shall consist of the names of: (a) ordained pastors recorded in the church reports adopted by presbytery, (b) other ministerial changes that take place at presbytery, and (c) any changes of pastoral status registered in writing with the Presiding Minister between the annual presbytery meetings. To this end:
 - a) Each church shall provide a written report to presbytery at the appointed yearly meeting which includes the names of each of the ordained pastors, as well as any ordained pastor without call that is recognized by that church.
 - b) The Presiding Minister of presbytery shall automatically add or remove from the list of recognized ordained men those changes which take place at presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:
 - i. a previously ordained man, who has had his ordination formally recognized by presbytery upon entering the CREC along with his church;
 - ii. any church removed from the CREC will have the names of its ordained officers removed from the list.
 - c) A church shall register all changes of pastoral status between presbytery meetings with the Presiding Minister of presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:
 - i. any man who sat for a CREC ordination exam and was recommended by the examination committee, ordained by his local CREC church, and installed as a minister;
 - ii. any previously ordained man, who was called by a CREC member church to be her minister, and is duly installed;
 - iii. any minister who was defrocked;

- iv. any minister without call who is a member of a local CREC church that the local church wants to recognize as a lawfully ordained minister.
- 4. Ministers without call whose ordinations are maintained by the CREC must be members of a CREC church.
 - a) A church, before receiving an ordained (but uninstalled) minister into membership, is under obligation to either approve or not approve the minister's credentials. The normal expectation is that a church will approve of a minister's credentials.
 - i. In the case that a minister's credentials are not approved the minister may:
 - (1) Pursue membership in another local church, or
 - (2) Submit to membership and so be released from his ministerial status by demitting (resigning) his office.
 - ii. If a minister's credentials are approved the local church must:
 - (1) Indicate the minister's status to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery
 - (2) Approve or not approve any ministerial activity (e.g., performing baptisms, marriages, publishing, etc.), and
 - (3) Take initiative in any proceedings of discipline leading to restoration or defrocking if the minister's doctrine or life is reproachable.
 - b) If a CREC minister does not receive a call within three years of having his "minister without call" status first recognized, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the church that holds his credentials unless specific permission is requested by the church and received from presbytery. This permission must be sought and granted on an annual basis.
- 5. Ministers under the oversight of another church or presbytery who are without call and desire to become members of a CREC church while remaining concurrently under the oversight of another body, must obtain approval by presbytery according to the procedure of the Constitution II.B.
- 6. Ministers who are at least 55 years old and who have served in one or more CREC churches for at least 10 years are eligible to retire as a minister and be recognized as an honorably retired minister. A retired minister who is a member of a CREC congregation, recommended by his session and approved by presbytery may be seated at presbytery, participate in discussion, serve on committees, give reports, but may not vote.
- 7. Upon request, the Presiding Minister may issue a letter to an inquiring body stating that the minister in question has been formally recognized by the CREC as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel.

Article XIII. Formal, Non-Binding Fraternal Relations

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

Article XIV. Miscellaneous Provisions

1. Emblem

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

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

2. Harmony of Books of Procedure

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

3. Translation of documents

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

4. Electronic Communications

The Presiding Minister of Council will maintain a confidential "list serve" restricted to members of a session for CREC member and mission churches, and retired CREC ministers, under the definition of BOP Article XII.6, whose sessions request they be added to the list. Those who violate the confidentiality of the list may be removed from the list at the discretion of the Presiding Minister of Council.

Appendix A

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

Moderator

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

Main Motion

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

Order

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

Amendments

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

Point of Order

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

Point of Privilege

A point of privilege can interrupt a speaker. A delegate who feels his rights or privileges have been infringed may bring up this point by stating his problem. Privilege refers to anything regarding the comfort or accessibility of the delegate (i.e., too much noise, bad photo copies, etc.), or to the right of the delegate not to be insulted, misquoted, or deliberately misinterpreted. The moderator decides if the point is valid or not and proceeds accordingly.

Challenge the Moderator

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

Point of Information

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

Table

Debate may end in several ways. If a delegate feels that a decision on a motion needs to be postponed for some reason, then he can move to “table” the motion. A delegate may not move to table the motion at the end of a speech, only at the time they are recognized by the moderator. A specified time may be put on the tabling, or the motion may be left indefinite. The only debate allowed is as to the length of tabling, or the timeline involved. The motion to table requires only a simple majority.

Previous Question

If a delegate feels that further debate is unproductive he may make a motion for the “previous question,” requesting the debate be ended and that the vote be taken on the main motion(s) before the presbytery. If there is no objection, the meeting proceeds to the

main motion(s). If there is objection then there must be a second to the motion for the previous question and the meeting must vote on whether to end debate. This vote requires a two-thirds majority to pass, and is non-debatable. If the “call” passes, a vote on the main motion is immediately taken, without any further debate.

A motion such as “I call for [or “call”] the question” or “I move we vote now” is simply a motion for the Previous Question made in nonstandard term. Care should be taken that failure to understand this fact does not lead to violation of members’ rights of debate. Sometimes the mere making of a motion for the Previous Question or “call for the question” may motivate unanimous consent to ending debate. Before or after such a motion has been seconded, the chair may ask if there is any objection to closing debate. If any member objects, he should ask if there is a second to the motion or call; or, if it has already been seconded, he must immediately take a vote on whether to order the Previous Question. But regardless of the wording a motion or “call” seeking to close debate, it always requires a second and a two-thirds vote, taken separately from and before the vote(s) on the motion(s) to which it is applied, to shut off debate against the will of even one member who wishes to speak and has not exhausted his right to debate.

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

Rescind

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

Reconsider

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

Suspension of the Rules

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

Adjourn

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

Refer or Commit

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

Minutes

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

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

Appendix B: Ministerial Examination, Ordination, and Related Matters.

Contents:

1. Pastoral Training and Internship
2. Application for Ordination
3. The Written Qualifying Examination
4. Required Work (demonstrating the candidate's competencies)
5. Required Guidelines for an Exegetical Paper
6. Sample Questions for Oral Examination
7. Recommended Ordination Vows
8. Ministerial Declarations
9. A Call Document

1. Pastoral Training and Internship

Before a man becomes a candidate for ordination, he must complete specialized studies in Bible, theology, and ministry. Ordinarily this includes an undergraduate degree and masters degree in a divinity-related subject. In addition, he must complete a pastoral internship. Such an internship should be under the oversight of a pastor and should last at least one year. The candidate serving in such an internship should participate in directed readings and study, preaching and teaching, personal ministry (visitation, evangelism, etc.), worship leadership, diaconal service, attending leadership meetings in a church (session, diaconal, consistory, etc.), and church administration. The requirement for this internship may be set aside or modified at the discretion of the examination committee in consultation with the local session, or it may be satisfied by ministry experience that is considered its equivalent.

2. Application for Ordination

Ordination in the CREC requires an "application" (below) to a presiding minister of a presbytery. The application consists of the following: a) a letter from the session of a CREC congregation recommending the candidate; b) a one-page biography with a photo of the candidate, wife and children (if applicable), describing educational and ministry background, work experience, etc.; c) the "call" document if applicable (see an example below); and d) a brief "personal statement" answering the following questions:

Personal Statement

1. Do you affirm that the Bible (original 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 the faith best defines your views? Please briefly state any exceptions to that 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? Please briefly state any exceptions to the CREC governing documents.
5. Describe your marriage/family/children (if applicable).
6. Discuss your use, if any, of pornography, illicit books, magazines, film, video, sexting, online dating for sexual purposes, online chatrooms, etc.
7. Discuss your use, if any, of illegal drugs.
8. Have you ever been convicted of a crime, been imprisoned, have outstanding legal matters pending, etc.? If so, explain.
9. Have you offended other Christians to the extent that they would deny your fitness to Church office? If so, explain.

3. The Written Qualifying Examination

Instructions: This is to be proctored and overseen by a CREC church elder. It must be completed within eight 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" requires only terms or names (e.g., list judges... Answer: "Sampson, Gideon,..."). "Outline" requires a structured list with biblical references (at least book and chapter). "Define" requires only a simple statement of the view or doctrine (without expressing agreement or disagreement). "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 this section of the books of the Bible in the order (of the English Bible): _____ (e.g., from Isaiah to Nahum; to be assigned).
2. List the ten commandments in order.
3. Discuss the circumstances of these three books _____ (e.g., Exodus, Haggai, Philemon; to be assigned).
4. Briefly outline the lives of these three Old Testament figures _____ (e.g., Abraham, Hosea, Elisha; to be assigned).
5. Defend your view of Genesis 1-2 (e.g., six day creation, day-age, etc.).
6. List the key themes/verses in the following five Psalms _____ (to be assigned).
7. List the Prophets who ministered during this era (e.g., pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic) _____ (an era is to be assigned).
8. Outline the following five Old Testament books _____ (to be assigned), commenting on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.
9. Outline the following five New Testament books _____ (to be assigned), commenting on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.
10. List biblical references (at least book and chapter) that address the following:
 1. Eucharist
 2. Baptism
 3. The Millennium
 4. Sacrifices
 5. Plagues
 6. Fishing
 7. Homosexuality
 8. Remarriage
 9. Ants
 10. Tithing
 11. Dietary Matters
 12. Rocks
11. List biblical references you would use to explain and defend the following:
 1. The Scripture's Authority
 2. The Trinity
 3. The Holy Spirit's Work
 4. Weekly Communion
 5. Civil Government
 6. God's Complete Control
 7. Church Officers
 8. The Place and Purpose of Mankind
 9. Covenant theology
 10. Being against the LGBTQ+ movement
 11. Private Property
 12. Angels
12. List biblical references that address the following:
 1. "The Cultural Mandate"
 2. "The Great Commission"
 3. Spiritual bodies
 4. Abrahamic Covenant
 5. Second giving of the Ten Commandments
 6. Living sacrifices
 7. One hundred-fifty-three
 8. The Prodigal Son
 9. "You are the Christ"
 10. Six hundred and sixty-six
 11. A runaway slave
 12. The destruction of the old creation
13. List the main theme of the following five New Testament chapters _____ (to be assigned).
14. Defend your view of the dating of the Gospels.

15. Give the book and the chapter location for each of these five biblical citations _____ (to be assigned). E.g.,
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...

BIBLIOLOGY & APOLOGETICS

16. Define textual criticism and the importance of such work to your faith and the faith of the historic Church.
17. List two ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.
18. Should our Old Testament be a translation from the LXX or the MT? Why?
19. Discuss the doctrine of sola Scriptura and how it relates to Church councils/creeds/ catechisms.
20. Defend your view of apologetics, touching on classical/evidentialism, fideism, and presuppositionalism.
21. Write a short paragraph on your favorite philosopher’s contribution to the Christian faith.
22. Discuss an apologetical conversation with a non-Christian and why you were persuasive or not.

THEOLOGY

23. List ten of God's attributes and identify whether they are communicable or incommunicable attributes.
24. How is the Trinity relevant to the life of the everyday Christian?
25. Define the economic and ontological Trinity.
26. Defend your view of the “eternal subordination” (or not) of the Son to the Father.
27. Discuss Christ’s divinity and humanity, describing His person(s) and nature(s).
28. Did Adam need to earn God’s favor in the Garden of Eden? Why or why not.
29. Define dispensationalism.
30. Discuss covenant theology.
31. Are the five points of Calvinism an accurate assessment of soteriology?
32. Can a “saved” person lose their salvation?
33. Is the atonement of the blessed Cross limited?
34. Define justification, including “final justification” (e.g., Rom. 2:13ff).
35. How do people grow in holiness in the Christian life?
36. What and who is Satan?
37. How many devils can dance on the head of a pin?
38. How many angels can dance on the head of a pin and why?
39. Is Satan alive and well on planet earth today?
40. Could there be self-conscious life on other planets (now)? Why or why not.

HISTORY, ECCLESIOLOGY, AND POLITY

41. Discuss the following five events/movements/figures in Church history _____ (e.g., Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Wycliffe, Huss, Tyndale, Knox; to be assigned).
42. When did the Church begin?
43. Should the office of Bishop be recognized in the Church?
44. Is Apostolic Succession necessary for ordination?
45. Is every elder a pastor?
46. What office(s) may women hold in the Church?
47. Does God do miracles today, if so, what may He do?
48. Does God still speak today? Please explain.
49. List the governing documents of the CREC.
50. List the current presbyteries of the CREC.
51. Define the two broader assemblies in the CREC and how they are constituted.
52. What disciplinary measures can CREC presbyteries or the Council take?
53. Outline some important sections/views of the CREC governing documents.
54. What improvements would you offer to the CREC governing documents?

WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

55. Define the “regulative principle of worship.”

56. Define “covenant renewal worship.”
57. What happens to a person in baptism, i.e., is a baptized person saved?
58. Defend your position on the recipients of baptism (infants or confessors).
59. Defend your position on the proper recipients of the Eucharist.
60. Defend your view of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
61. Should congregants come forward to receive communion from Christ’s representatives or receive the elements from other congregants (passing trays of individual elements)?
62. What should precede the Eucharist in a worship service?
63. Should worshipers ever raise their hands in a worship service?
64. What kind of music should be used in worship?

ESCHATOLOGY

65. Discuss “new creation” and the future, touching on the Resurrection of believers.
66. Is hell eternal, conscious torment or a temporary destruction?
67. What happens to a believer at death?
68. What happens to a believer at the Resurrection?
69. Defend your view of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24, Mark 13, etc.).
70. Defend your specific view of the “end times” (e.g., millennium, tribulation, rapture, etc.).

ETHICS

71. Should abortion ever be permitted, if so, in what circumstances?
72. Defend your view of capital punishment.
73. Is it ever acceptable to God to lie or deceive others, such as the case of Rahab?
74. Defend your view of divorce and remarriage.
75. Would you permit a remarried (unbiblically divorced) candidate to hold congregational office? Explain.
76. What is the best Christian response to matters surrounding climate change?
77. What is the best Christian response to the Black Lives Matter movement?
78. Discuss racism in the world and the gospel response to it.
79. Discuss your response to a church member whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with his/her birth sex.
80. Discuss your view of war and/or armed conflict, i.e., “just war.”
81. What steps will you take to avoid plagiarism in ministry?
82. List the actions you would do if it was discovered that a 21-year old person (or older) in your congregation engaged in sexual activity with a person under 18 years old.
83. How will you protect your church from sexual predators?

PASTORAL

84. Discuss your goal in preaching.
85. Outline your method in preparing to preach.
86. How long should an ordinary sermon last (in minutes) and why?
87. Who is your favorite preacher and why?
88. In one sentence, answer the question: what is the content and effect of a good sermon?
89. List the main issues in our culture today that must be addressed from the pulpit?
90. Discuss pastoral confidentiality, answering the question, “When would you call social services or the police?”
91. What would you do if a young woman and her mother scheduled a counseling session at your home office, but at the last minute the mother could not come, leaving you alone with a young woman?
92. Outline your counsel to a man regularly using online porn.
93. Outline your counsel to a woman who is same-sex attracted.
94. Outline your counsel to a husband and wife who have not engaged in sexual intercourse in more than one year.
95. Would you preside at a wedding of two people that are living together? Why/why not?

4. Required Work (demonstrating the candidate's competencies)

After private oral examination(s), the candidate is to provide the committee with other work to demonstrate ministerial competence including at least five pastoral case studies, two sermons, and two exegetical papers. The committee may also assign other work if needed in order to address a deficiency.

1. Five pastoral case studies _____ (to be assigned).

Example: A pastoral case study is a 1000-2000 word response addressing an assigned pastoral problem or situation, such as the example below.

Sample Pastoral Case Study

Situation: After joining the church and attending faithfully for several years, a man is nominated to serve as a deacon, having demonstrated a real commitment to practical service to the congregation. Some of his interpersonal interactions with members of the congregation have made people uncomfortable enough to voice their concerns to the session. He is highly opinionated and often raises his voice awkwardly in otherwise normal conversations. He regularly seeks out young girls to address and to help.

Case Study Response: What issues need to be addressed? How does this 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? What process would you use to address this (go to session, go first privately, investigate with certain disaffected individuals first, etc.)?

2. Sermons - The candidate should provide at least two recorded (audio or video) sermons, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, along with outlines or manuscripts of the sermons.

3. Exegetical Papers - The candidate should provide two exegetical papers (one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament), assigned by the committee. The assigned papers are limited to no more than five verses. The committee may permit the candidate to submit previously written work conforming to the guidelines below.

5. Required Guidelines for an Exegetical Paper

A successful exegetical paper demonstrates the candidate's scholarship and ability with the original languages of Scripture, in lieu of courses or translation from Hebrew and Greek. Each paper is to be no more than 5000 words (sent to the chairman according to his format requirements, such as in Word or PDF, double-spaced, footnotes not endnotes, etc.).

An exegetical paper should include the following: a) at least ten different scholarly sources, such as lexicons, dictionaries, commentaries, journal articles, specialized books on the subject, etc.; b) an assessment of the passage in relation to the larger book and other books by the same biblical writer; c) an acknowledgement of the genre of literature, any subtexts alluded to by the biblical writer, any relevant hermeneutical issues (e.g., typology, hyperbole, apocalyptic language, key terms, puns, translation or textual issues, etc.); d) a discussion of alternate interpretations and an exegetical argument for the conclusion showing a familiarity with the original language underlying the passage; e) a brief conclusion noting the relevance of this exegesis for the Church today.

6. Sample Questions for Oral Examination

In the presbytery examination, the committee should ask questions which highlight the candidate's knowledge in a succinct, factual manner (e.g., "What are the ten commandments?"), as well as questions requiring deeper reflection, integration, and application about the teaching of Scripture and Reformational theology. The following are examples of such questions for deeper reflection.

Comment on the theme of _____ in the Bible (e.g., water, mountains, seed/fruit, trees, the number 7, music, marriage, sheep and shepherds, etc.).

1. An atheist friend whose wife of 20 years just died of cancer confronts you: "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. . ." How would you respond?

2. After a Sunday School class discussion of the Trinity, one of your members says, “I’ve always found that stuff about the Trinity so confusing. I guess that’s what the Bible teaches. But I have some good friends at work who are Muslim and Jewish. Sometimes we even pray together. I believe in the Trinity, I guess, but is it really that important?” How would you respond?

3. 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 torturing His Son is 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?

4. After a sermon on the danger of apostasy, a person asks. “Are you saying that we can lose our salvation? I thought you held to the perseverance of the saints?” How would you respond?

5. A college student returns for a summer break after taking a “religion” class at a state university. When you reach out to her she has serious concerns about the Bible. She asks, “Why don’t you talk about all the other Gospels and not just Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?”

7. Recommended Ordination Vows

Vows are ordinarily administered directly by the local session but may be administered by presbytery upon the request and authorization of the local session.

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 system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and Reformed faith?
3. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the tenants of this faith, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your session and presbytery the change which has taken place in your views?
4. Do you promise faithfully to perform all the duties of a minister and to endeavor by the grace of God to be an example before the Church in which God has made you a minister?
5. Do you promise to submit to your brethren, including your session and the decisions of the broader church in your presbytery and the general council of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches?
6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity, growth, and glorification of the Body of Christ and especially the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches?

8. Ministerial Declarations

Declaration at presbytery by the presiding minister: “We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in leadership with all the elders of [_____ presbytery name]. I now pronounce and declare that [candidate’s name] has been lawfully examined and approved as agreeable to the Word of God and according to the Constitution of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches as a minister of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Declaration at the ordination event by the presiding pastor or elder:

“We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with all the elders of [congregation name]. I now pronounce and declare that [candidate’s name] has been lawfully examined, approved, and duly ordained as a minister in the Church as agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the constitution of this congregation and the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches. Therefore, you are 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.”

9. Exhibit: A “Call” Document

The session of elders of [congregation] of [location], being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, [minister’s name], and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel of Jesus, the true and resurrected King, will be profitable to our spiritual interests, community life, and gospel dominion, do earnestly call you to undertake the office of Minister in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord.

That you may be duly supported, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of [\$ _____] per year for salary and [\$ _____] for a lawful housing allowance, as well as [\$ _____] for the fringe benefits of

[_____ e.g., insurance, pastoral expenses, travel, etc.], including but not limited to [number of weeks] weeks of annual vacation.

Acceptance of this call was verified in session on [_____ date].

Signed [_____ session members or authorized representative]

Appendix C

A “Golden Rule” for Cooperation among Churches

I. Scriptural Basis

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

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

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

II. Principal Concerns

1. That we promote the unity, peace and purity of churches in the matter of their mutual involvement in the movement of members.
2. That we develop greater knowledge of, respect for and communication with these congregations and denominations in the area of their ecclesiastical discipline.
3. That we, while promoting goodwill between the churches, seek also to promote the growth and maturity of the persons involved through the positive application of church discipline.
4. That we signify our desire to discipline members by not ignoring another church’s discipline, and that we believe that the judgment of officers in Christ’s church may not be disregarded as though they were not acting for God in His church.
5. That we demonstrate to all that the church of Christ is one, and that He has one law for all its parts.
6. That churches have occasionally, while perhaps unintentionally, received members and/or ordained officers who were under various stages of discipline in other churches, thus creating misunderstanding and tension between the churches.
7. That we recognize the need for mutual freedom and openness on the part of the churches.

III. The “Golden Rule” for Church Cooperation

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

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

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

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