

2021 Council Meeting Minutes
Monroe, Louisiana
October 27-28, 2021

I. Roll Call and Setting of Quorum

Present Delegates:

Anselm Presbytery

Dave Hatcher—Trinity Church—Kirkland, WA

Jerry Owen—Emmanuel Church—Bothell, WA

Athanasius Presbytery

Rob Hadding—Christ Church—Pace, FL

Uri Brito—Providence Church—Pensacola, FL

Augustine Presbytery

Gregg Strawbridge—All Saints—Lancaster, PA

Laurence Windham—St. Peter Presbyterian—Bristol, VA

Knox Presbytery

Douglas Wilson—Christ Church—Moscow, ID

Kenton Spratt—Christ Church—Spokane, WA

Tyndale Presbytery

Bill Smith—Cornerstone Reformed Church—Carbondale, IL

Steve Hemmeke—Christ Church of Livingston County—Howell, MI

Wycliffe Presbytery

Randy Booth—Grace Covenant Church—Nacogdoches, TX

Steve Wilkins—Church of the Redeemer—Monroe, LA

Zooming Delegates:

Hus Presbytery

Ben Zedek Smith—Mitaka Evangelical Church—Tokyo, Japan Bogumil

Jarmulak—Evangelical Reformed Church—Poznan, Poland

II. Welcome and Exhortation from the Word

III. Amendment to in Person Meeting Protocols: Constitution and Bylaws Article V.C.

Motion from Virgil Hurt. Uri Brito seconded.

Motion: To add the sentence, “The Broader assemblies may set aside this provision by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of those present for the current meeting.”

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PMOC Report

PMOC actions to ratify:

1- CREC statement on Religious Exemption to Mandatory Medical Procedures;

2-Moved Council Location from Chicago to Monroe;

3-Formation of 3 Commissions and 1 Committee-International Missions

Commission, Church Planting Commission, Pastoral Recruitment Commission, Mandatory Vaccine Committee.

Discussion of concerns about creation of bureaucracy through long-term commissions. Gregg Strawbridge distinguishes that Committees research and report. Commission should be for *pro forma* work that do not need ratified by the council.

Motion by Virgil Hurt. Gregg Strawbridge seconded.

Motion: To ratify Virgil Hurt’s three actions as PMOC.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Motion from Wycliffe on Memorials

After some discussion, it was agreed that, due to the overlapping concerns of the Statements Memorials by Wycliffe and Knox, the motion would be tabled until representatives from both presbyteries could come to agreement on a motion.

Motion was Tabled

VI. Motion from Knox, Statement on Memorials

Tabled for now (see above)

VII. Motion from Randy Booth. Jerry Owen seconded.

Motion: to amend the agenda to include a prepared motion on the PMOC statements.

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Motion Wycliffe Presbytery (Randy Booth) to pass an addition to the CREC Book of Procedures regarding PMOC statements. Steve Hemmeke seconded.

Motion: To add the following to the CREC Book of Procedures.

Public Statements by the PMOC

“Ordinarily, public statements made by the PMoC should be drafted by the PMoC, edited into a final form by the PMoC in consultation with the PMoPs, and then submitted by e-mail to all council delegates from each presbytery for ratification by a simple vote within a reasonable timeframe specified by the PMoC. Such statements should be published only if ratified.

In extraordinary circumstances, when a very significant issue requires a response more rapidly than the above process would allow, the PMoC may issue a public statement headed, ‘For consideration by the CREC,’ without

seeking prior presbytery ratification. Such statements will be either ratified or rejected by the presbyteries at the next regular or ad hoc council meeting.

However, the PMoC should exercise extreme caution in making statements such as these, recognizing the damage that would result from hasty statements that may subsequently prove ill-judged.

After some debate, the **motion failed**.

IX. Previous Committee Motions

- A. Memorial on Abortion- This was a 2014 Committee. At the 2020 Ad Hoc meeting it was noted that Memorials cannot be adopted at Ad Hoc meetings, so this item is back on the agenda for 2021. Second Reading, available for adoption.

Motion already in process from previous ad hoc meeting to adopt this memorial.

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Memorial on Terrorism- This was a 2017 Committee re-working of our original Memorial on Terror. Second reading, available for adoption.

Motion already in process from previous ad hoc meeting to adopt this memorial.

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Memorial on Sex and Marriage, first reading.

Virgil Hurt moved to approve this first reading of the Memorial on Sex, Marriage, and Procreation

Motion carried.

X. Wycliffe/Knox Statement on Memorials (compromise revision) [*See V. and VI. Above*]

Douglas Wilson moved to accept the statement. Randy Booth seconded.

Motion: To accept the revised Wycliffe/Knox statement on Memorials.

Discussion ensued with a number of friendly amendments. The final text of the Statement reads:

“From this date, all new memorials must be submitted in a form not to exceed 100 words, although briefer is preferred. Memorials may be accompanied by a supporting (non public) resource paper, not to exceed 5,000 words.

These new shorter memorials must go through the existing process of adoption (i.e. first reading at one Council, final adoption at the next).

Memorials that are in process, and not yet finally adopted, may be adopted at the next Council meeting provided the 100 word summary is provided in a timely way.

The PM will assign different committees to write a 100 word version (or less) of all of our existing memorials. These versions can be adopted by Council at our next Council meeting, provided a draft of the shorter version is provided to all Council delegates two months before Council meeting.

When the shorter version is adopted, the existing memorial is automatically adopted as a resource.

The CREC will create an official Book of Resources. This will result in the CREC having three primary documents: the Constitution, the Book of

Memorials, and our Book of Confessions. Our secondary documents will be our Book of Procedures, which is public, and our Book of Resources, which is not. The status of resources is that they are commended for consideration, interaction, edification, training, and study. To be included in the Book of Resources, a 2/3 vote of Council is required.

All churches are expected to be in harmony with the Book of Memorials, in the spirit of honest subscription. The same expectation applies to all entering churches, and candidate churches can expect questions concerning the memorials as part of their admission to the CREC.”

Motion passed unanimously.

XI. Motion from Knox, Proposed Memorial on Abuse.

Douglas Wilson requested that this submission be considered a memorial in process for purposes of a first reading. No objections.

Douglas Wilson made the motion. Kenton Spratt seconded.

Motion: That this paper on abuse be approved as a first reading so it can ultimately be adopted as a memorial at the subsequent Council.

Motion failed.

XII. Motion from Knox for Constitutional Amendment on the qualifications for elders.

Knox Presbytery moved (Douglas Wilson) to amend the CREC Constitution.

Kenton Spratt seconded.

Motion: To insert the proposed paragraph in the Constitution under Article II which addresses “The Offices” creating a new final paragraph labeled “J.”

After some discussion, Bogumil Jarmulak made a substitute motion. Randy Booth seconded.

Substitute Motion: To add as Article 8.1.C to the BOP “Upon any instance of divorce, marital separation, or excommunication (or similar public scandal that implicates the reputation of the broader assembly) in a minister’s or elder’s household.”

Dave Hatcher made a substitute motion to include the proposed language in the constitution. Jerry Owen seconded.

Substitute Motion failed.

Pastor Jarmulak’s motion carried.

XIII. Randy Booth moved to reconsider the Memorial on Abuse. Bill Smith seconded.

Virgil Hurt recognized John Stoos as parliamentarian to explain the procedure to the Council.

Motion carried unanimously

First reading of new memorial occurred. Steve Hemmeke offered a friendly amendment.

Final text of memorial: “Abuse is the mistreatment of any person by neglect, cruelty, or violence, whether spiritually, physically, or verbally as defined by the Word of God alone. God requires His people to provide compassionate and judicious care that defends true victims, and which calls for appropriate reporting, church discipline, and criminal prosecution of genuine perpetrators. Therefore, we reject all coercive or manipulative pressure or alien evaluative standards that pervert biblical justice, whether by those who would ignore true abuse or by intellectual trends that seek to weaponize victimhood, since they necessarily distort the healing grace offered to all in the gospel.”

Motion carried unanimously. First reading of memorial received.

XIV. Randy Booth moved to amend the agenda to add a discussion about Steve Jeffery's document about Critical Race Theory. Gregg Strawbridge seconded

Motion carried unanimously.

XV. Motion from Knox (Doug Wilson) to amend Constitution, Article IV.A.7. Reasons are related to Memorial on Sex and Marriage. Kenton Spratt seconded.

Motion: To amend Art. IV. A. 7. so that it reads: "Assemblies may from time-to-time address by means of overtures, memorials (see Article IX), or confessional statements issues not included not sufficiently addressed, given current circumstances, in the historic creeds and confessions."

Steve Hemmeke proposed the word "overtures" be stricken from the amendment as the word is nowhere defined in our documents. Received as a friendly amendment.

Final text of amendment: "Assemblies may from time-to-time address by means of memorials (see Article IX) or confessional statements issues not sufficiently addressed, given current circumstances, in the historic creeds and confessions."

Motion carried unanimously.

XVI. Motion from Hus (Ben Zedek Smith) to revise our Retired Minister section. Gregg Strawbridge seconded.

Motion: That article XII.6 of the BOP be amended to say: "Ministers who have served in one or more churches for at least 20 years, including at least 10 years in one or more CREC churches, and are at least 50 years old, are eligible to retire as a minister and be recognized by their session as an honorably retired minister (pastor emeritus). A pastor emeritus shall retain all honors and privileges associated with the ministry of Word and Sacrament. A pastor emeritus who is a

member of a CREC congregation may, with the consent of his session, serve in any office or function in his presbytery or the council, including but not limited to serving as a delegate, serving on a committee, or serving as a presiding minister.”

Motion Carried.

XVII. Church Planting Commission Report

XVIII. Minister Recruitment Commission Report

XIX. International Missions Commission Report and Motions

Bogumil Jarmulak made a **motion**: to add to Article VI of Constitution:

- “C. The Presiding Minister of Council shall appoint the International Missions Commission and its chairman when he deems it necessary.
1. The commission would assist international churches to join the CREC, and in time assist to form new international presbyteries. In particular, the commission shall vet such international churches and acculturate them to the CREC culture, theology, and system of government. The commission can also sponsor international churches to become members of the CREC.
 2. The commission shall be appointed for 3 years to be extended upon the Presiding Minister of Council’s discretion. The commission shall have no less than three members. Each member of the commission shall be either an active CREC officer or a CREC retired minister.
 3. Expenses connected with travel, teaching, and training done by the commission shall be covered by voluntary donations.

4. Should other urgent financial needs arise in the process of bringing international churches into the CREC, the commission may notify the Presiding Minister of Council to consider further action.
5. The commission shall report its activities annually to presbyteries and the Council. The annual plan for the commission's activities must be approved by the Presiding Minister of Council."

Virgil Hurt recognized Joost Nixon as committee chair to speak to the Council.

After a good deal of discussion, **the motion was withdrawn.**

The commission created by PMOC Hurt can continue the work they're doing, and the issue can be brought up again if it seems it will be beneficial.

Douglas Wilson requested that PMOC Hurt include as part of the committee's task to find large, thriving CREC churches stateside who are willing to become sister churches for international churches wishing to join the CREC.

XX. PMOC Motion on Attendance at Stated Meetings

Motion from Virgil Hurt. Uri Brito Seconded

Motion: To insert the following at Article IV. B. 2. Renumber 1.2.and 3.

"Attendance at stated meetings is required. A church failing to send a delegate to a stated meeting without prior written approval of the Presiding Minister, shall receive a warning.

If two consecutive stated meetings are missed, the church shall be subject to discipline by vote of presbytery or council, which may consist of a letter

of reprimand, or being reduced to mission status, or removal from membership.”

After friendly amendments from Steve Hemmeke, Gregg Strawbridge, and Douglas Wilson, the text reads:

“Attendance at stated meetings is required. A member church failing to send a delegate to a stated meeting shall give prior notice to the Presiding Minister. Prolonged absence from presbytery will result in a letter of admonition from the Presiding Minister, which may lead to presbytery action up to removal from presbytery.”

Motion carried unanimously.

XXI. Motion from Wycliffe (Randy Booth) regarding payment for PMs. Jerry Owen seconded

Motion: To include the following in the book of procedures.

Each Council shall set a three-year budget to cover expenses and compensation for the Presiding Minister of Council (PMoC). It shall be the responsibility of each presbytery to provide the funds for this budget based on the number of churches and the size of those churches. Funds shall be sent to the local church of the PMoC and distributed by its session to the PMoC and/or to the church’s accounts, according to the needs of and expenses incurred by that local church in providing its pastor to be PMoC.

Bill Smith made a substitute motion. Douglas Wilson seconded.

Substitute Motion: To include the following in the BOP

The Presiding Ministers of Presbytery (PMoP) and of Council (PMoC), provide a pastoral service to the broader church and, therefore, have the

right to receive remuneration for their service (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1-12a; cp. Romans 15:27). The churches to whom they minister are obligated to provide for the needs of their ministry. We suggest that churches work toward the goal of giving at least one percent of their annual income to be divided based on needs of the PMoC and the PMoP. However, no mandatory percentage or amount should be imposed on the churches. Each church should give in proportion to its ability. We recommend that each church set aside funds in a special account to be held by that local church until the needs are made known. The PM should let his needs be known, or he may waive his right to receive remuneration from the churches (cf. 1 Cor. 9:12b-18).

Randy Booth offered as a friendly amendment to add the sentence “The stipend for the PMoC and PMoP will be set by council or presbytery respectively.”

Substitute Motion carried unanimously.

XXII. Endorsement from Knox On Authority, Order, and Equality within the Godhead
Douglas Wilson made the motion. Dave Hatcher seconded.

Motion: That the statement from Knox On Authority, Order, and Equality within the Godhead be included in our Book of Resources.

Motion carried.

XXIII. Constitutional Review Committee Report and Motions. Still waiting on a final document to post.

Steve Hemmeke moved to table

Dave Hatcher seconded.

Motion carried.

XXIV. BOP Reconciliation-Motion from Anselm (Dave Hatcher) on Provisional Presbyteries.

Motion: That CREC Council adopt the following text as a new article in the Council Book of Procedures.

“Provisional Presbyteries

1. Creating a Provisional Presbytery

A CREC Presbytery, by majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting, may create a Provisional Presbytery for the purpose of preparing a segment of the Presbytery for eventual establishment as a separate Presbytery within the CREC.

2. Provisional Presbytery – Powers and Restrictions

a. A Provisional Presbytery shall have the following powers:

i. To elect a Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro*

tempore;

ii. To hold Stated Meetings and *ad hoc* Meetings. Minutes of any such meetings must be reported to the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery within 30 days of the meeting’s conclusion;

iii. To appoint *ad hoc* committees;

iv. To formulate plans of action concerning matters common to its churches;

v. To evaluate candidates for ordination and to make recommendations to local churches regarding ordination.

Examination results and the recommendations therefrom shall

be reported to the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery within 30 days of the conclusion of the procedure;

vi. To inquire into the spiritual health of member churches, in consultation with the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery;

vii. To offer a timely pastoral voice to public issues of common concern to its members;

viii. In consultation with the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery, to mediate in situations wherein a local church's Session is at an impasse or when a local church's Session is a party in a dispute either with one of its own members, with the Session of another CREC church, or with a non-CREC church.

b. A Provisional Presbytery is restricted from performing the following activities:

i. Electing and sending delegates to the CREC Council;

ii. Amending the governing documents of the parent Presbytery, except that a Provisional Presbytery may formulate proposed amendments to either the parent Presbytery's or the CREC's governing documents for consideration by the parent Presbytery at a properly called meeting of the entire presbytery;

iii. Addressing in formal (judicial) action matters referred to them by the Session of a member church or by another CREC broader assembly;

iv. Admit new churches into membership;

- v. Mediate in disputes between a member church and a broader assembly of the CREC;
- vi. Require mediation or non-binding arbitration in any situation that may arise in a member church;
- vii. Censure or expel a member church or a CREC official.

3. Consultation

Consultation required under any provision of Section 2 Subsection a in this Article means the Presiding Minister of the Provisional Presbytery must seek and obtain the approval of the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery before any such action is initiated. The Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery may consult with any other pastor in his own Presbytery or in another CREC Presbytery before approving any such proposed action by the Presiding Minister of the Provisional Presbytery.

4. Representation from Presbytery

When a Provisional Presbytery is created under this article, the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery shall appoint a representative from a church in the parent Presbytery located outside the boundaries of the proposed Provisional Presbytery to be present as an advisor at all stated meetings of the Provisional Presbytery.

5. Language restrictions

All meetings of a Provisional Presbytery must be conducted in English in compliance with CREC Book of Procedures Article VI.

6. Tenure of a Provisional Presbytery

Any motion made before the parent Presbytery that would create a Provisional Presbytery under the terms of this Article must include the time period during which the Provisional Presbytery will exist. At any future properly called meeting of the parent Presbytery, the time period may be reexamined and extended by a majority vote of Presbytery.

7. Delegates and membership

Notwithstanding any meetings of the Provisional Presbytery, member churches of the Provisional Presbytery shall continue to send delegates to all properly called meetings of the parent Presbytery. Member churches of a Provisional Presbytery continue to be member churches of the parent Presbytery with all the rights and privileges of such membership.

8. Termination of a Provisional Presbytery

- a. A Provisional Presbytery is disbanded automatically, along with all restrictions thereon, immediately upon its approval by the CREC Council as a fully constituted Presbytery of the CREC;
- b. A Provisional Presbytery, upon a majority vote of its members, may file a formal request to be disbanded by the parent Presbytery at any time. If such a formal request is received by the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery, he may call an *ad hoc* meeting of Presbytery to consider the matter, or he may defer action until the next regularly scheduled Stated Meeting of Presbytery, at his sole

discretion. A simple majority vote of Presbytery is required to disband a Provisional Presbytery.

c. A Provisional Presbytery may be disbanded by a simple majority vote of the parent Presbytery at any properly called meeting of Presbytery.”

Motion carried.

XXV. Proposed Constitutional Amendment Presented by Augustine Presbytery.

Gregg Strawbridge made the motion. Laurence Windham seconded.

Motion: To revise CREC Constitution Article V. B, striking two sentences as below.

~~“The Council will have a stated meeting every three years. In the year that Council meets, Presbyteries must have their annual meeting at the same place and time.~~

If two thirds of the Presbyteries submit a written request to the Presiding Minister of Council, an ad hoc Council meeting can be called. The decision to call for an ad hoc meeting of Council cannot be made at Council. ~~The requirement that Presbyteries convene at the same place and time as Council does not apply to ad hoc meetings of Council.”~~

Gregg offered a friendly amendment that, rather than striking out clauses, the following sentence will be added: “Any exceptions to this must be approved by the PMoC.”

Motion failed.

XXVI. Dr. Steve Jefferey’s paper on Critical Theory and the Social Justice Movement

Motion by Randy Booth. Gregg Strawbridge seconded.

Motion: that the paper be heard as a first reading of a memorial.

Randy Booth revised his Motion as Substitute that this be presented as the framework for a PMOC statement.

Bill Smith seconded.

Substitute Motion carried.

XXVII. Council Location for 2023-Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho has offered to host.

XXVIII. Gregg Strawbridge moved to commend Steve Wilkins and Church of the Redeemer for their hosting of the event.

Motion carried unanimously.

XXIX. Motion to Adjourn

Randy Booth **moved that the meeting adjourn.**

Motion carried unanimously.