

Updated @ 11-2014 Presbytery

By-Laws: Principles and Practices of Church Life

also known as

THE BOOK OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

OF THE

COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**CONTAINING THE DIRECTORY OF CHURCH ORDER,
THE DIRECTORY OF DISCIPLINE, AND THE
DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP AS WELL AS THE
CREEDALIZED LAW OF THE LORD TO BE USED IN
THE TRAINING AND EXAMINATION OF ALL
CHURCH OFFICERS**

Abbreviations Used

Abbreviations:

BC	=	Belgic Confession
BCG	=	Book of Church Government
CD	=	Canons of Dordt
CON	=	Constitution of the CRPC
DCD	=	Directory of Church Discipline
DCO	=	Directory of Church Order
DCW	=	Directory of Church Worship
HC	=	Heidelberg Catechism
WCF	=	Westminster Confession of Faith
WLC	=	Westminster Larger Catechism
WSC	=	Westminster Shorter Catechism

Chapter and Section given by Arabic numerals separated by a colon, i.e. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4, Section 3 = WCF 4:3.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE ABBREVIATIONS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

<u><i>Book</i></u>	<u><i>Abbrev.</i></u>	<u><i>Book</i></u>	<u><i>Abbrev.</i></u>
Genesis	Gen	Ecclesiastes.....	Ecc
Exodus	Exo	Song of Solomon	SoS
Leviticus	Lev	Isaiah.....	Isa
Numbers	Num	Jeremiah.....	Jer
Deuteronomy	Deu	Lamentations	Lam
Joshua	Jos	Ezekiel	Ezk
Judges	Jdg	Daniel	Dan
Ruth	Rut	Hosea	Hos
1 Samuel	1Sa	Joel	Joe
2 Samuel	2Sa	Amos	Amo
1 Kings	1Ki	Obadiah	Oba
2 Kings	2Ki	Jonah.....	Jon
1 Chronicles.....	1Ch	Micah.....	Mic
2 Chronicles.....	2Ch	Nahum	Nah
Ezra.....	Ezr	Habakkuk.....	Hab
Nehemiah.....	Neh	Zephaniah	Zep
Esther.....	Est	Haggai.....	Hag
Job	Job	Zechariah	Zec
Psalms.....	Psa	Malachi.....	Mal
Proverbs.....	Pro		

THE NEW TESTAMENT

<u><i>Book</i></u>	<u><i>Abbrev.</i></u>	<u><i>Book</i></u>	<u><i>Abbrev.</i></u>
Matthew	Mat	1 Timothy	1Ti
Mark	Mar	2 Timothy	2Ti
Luke.....	Luk	Titus.....	Tit
John	Joh	Philemon.....	Phm
Acts.....	Act	Hebrews.....	Heb
Romans	Rom	James	Jam
1 Corinthians	1Co	1 Peter.....	1Pe
2 Corinthians	2Co	2 Peter.....	2Pe
Galatians.....	Gal	1 John	1Jo
Ephesians.....	Eph	2 John	2Jo
Philippians	Php	3 John	3Jo
Colossians.....	Col	Jude.....	Jud
1 Thessalonians	1Th	Revelation.....	Rev
2 Thessalonians	2Th		

PREFACE

The By-Laws of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian¹ Church (CRPC) help to bring to expression the Scriptural principles found in the Constitution. The three documents contained in the By-Laws—the Directory of Church Order (DCO), the Directory of Church Discipline (DCD), and the Directory of Church Worship (DCW)—form a manual of practice for the denomination. If there is any contradiction between the By-Laws and the Constitution, the Constitution supercedes the By-Laws.

Brief Introductory Principles of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church²

In the following statement of introductory principles, 1) the term “Presbytery” is intended to mean that body of church officers gathered in assemblies broader than the local church government and 2) Session is the term used for the local church presbytery.

1. We exist as a Presbytery for the “well-being” of churches and not for the “essence” of the church.
2. We exist to give evidence of the spiritual unity we have in Christ (cf. John 17:20-23). We do not create it, Christ does. Nor do we seek to have a working relationship whereby we “rule over” one another.
3. Each local church is a church in her own “right” and has her headquarters in heaven rather than in Presbytery.
4. We exist to seek and give mutual advice when asked, to be a place of appeals, and to establish courts for trials as these become necessary.
5. We exist to be a help to the local Sessions for the purposes of examination of candidates for the Ministry and, if so requested, also for Elders.
6. Presbytery is a servant to the local Session rather than that Session is a servant to the Presbytery.
7. We hold to the principle that, “No church/Minister/Session may lord it over another church/Minister/Session”. It is not the prerogative of Presbytery to legislate how each particular church/Session ought to do things which go beyond what we have covenanted to do in the Book of Church Government.
8. We have no standing committees and no budgets, other than what a given meeting of Presbytery might deem necessary for a specific period of time and/or purpose.

¹ *Approved footnote 10-19-2004.* The form of Presbyterianism which is used throughout this Book of Church Government seeks to follow the Scriptures in all areas of polity where they clearly speak. In the remaining areas, where godly wisdom must be utilized, the experience and history of polity practices is drawn both from the “Continental” and “Presbyterian” churches. The principle generally followed is that broader assemblies have a biblical right to be called into being by their constituent churches and make decisions related to doctrine, practice, and judicial appeals. That right is established in Scripture, and pertains primarily to those matters of concern to all the churches such as doctrinal and judicial determinations. Such assemblies are composed of “overseers and other rulers” from constituent churches (WCF 31:1). While these broader assemblies are composed of teaching and ruling officers from local churches and thus utilize the multitude of counsel, participation, and representation of its constituent churches, nevertheless, the authority by which decisions are made is one derived directly from God through Scripture (cf. WCF 31:3).

² Brief Introductory Principles added at 07-2008 American Presbytery. See minutes for details.

9. We bring together what we consider to be the best of “Presbyterian Church Polity” and “Reformed Church Polity”. For example:
 - (a) We have church courts but not standing courts (they exist by creation of Presbytery and for a specific case/trial).
 - (b) Our Ministers are members of the local church and are under the authority of the local Session in regards to their ethical conduct but their ministerial credentials are held by the Presbytery.
10. When we gather as Presbytery, we do so as delegates of the local sessions and not as church. Therefore, we do not hold worship services at Presbytery.
11. We trust God to grant wisdom to each governing church body as they deal with each situation. This affects our Book of Church Government, in that we do not seek to establish laws for each situation and scenario.
12. We believe that these principles ought to govern the motives for a given church to seek to join our Presbytery and/or to separate from our Presbytery.
13. We seek unity with all true churches which are governed by Christ through men of good faith, who love the biblical truth and desire to defend it and promote it with us. Therefore, we call ourselves *Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church* because:
 - a. *Covenant* reminds us of God’s unfailing commitment to His people and our bond to one another in Christ so as to capture the heart of both the Scriptures and these covenant documents and not their mere words alone;
 - b. *Reformed* reminds us that our theology is that rooted and grounded in the Scriptures and revived through the Protestant Reformation and that our polity contains the best of that found in churches of Reformed polity;
 - c. *Presbyterian* reminds us that our church government is by Christ ruling through a plurality of elders with equal votes though differing gifts and contains the best of that found in churches of Presbyterian polity;
 - d. *Church* reminds us again of our covenanted and spiritual unity with Christ’s one church. It is not intended to convey the hierarchical concept of one overarching central denominational church government. While we are essentially governed by Christ at the local church level, we do not call ourselves *churches* because we wish to demonstrate our distinction from those of an essentially historical congregational polity.

DIRECTORY of CHURCH ORDER

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THE DIRECTORY OF CHURCH ORDER

PREFACE

It is to be regretted that, at this time in history, when the Christian faith is commanding so little influence in the social, political, and economic affairs which affects society, that the Church should be engaged with questions which affect her own life rather than the life of the majority of the people. Questions regarding the place of God's Law in the life of the church, the function of derived standards such as creeds and covenants, the order and essence of worship, the importance of preaching and the sacraments, the relevance of Christian education, and the priorities given to Christian counseling, all consume the Church to such a degree that little else can be done until such issues can be resolved. Yet, is it not because of the prevailing religious apathy so dominant in Christianity that the Church must, of necessity, lay again solid foundations so as to be able to "set her own house in order"? If "judgment begins in the house of God" is it not proper that such chastisement should cause the Church to humble herself before her divine Husband and implore His strength to reestablish "decency and good order" which is so pleasing to Him? Such is the task given to all Christians in our generation.

The Constitution along with the By-Laws: Principles and Policies of Church Life (which we refer to as our Book of Church Government) are designed for the establishment of such order. They are designed to fulfill presbyterian functions as ordained in the Word of God. It specifies objective principles of God's Word for areas of life, ministry, and rule so that the ever-changing opinions of men may be thwarted and the proper place of God-ordained authority maintained.

These documents lay the ground work for the ethic and commitments upon entry into the individual church so as to apprise each member of his individual obligations, disallowing any claim to ignorance in the violation of sound covenantal church order . . . and leaves them responsible before God and men. Churches are thereby judicially protected, promoted, and kept, by objective witness, without which, schism may rear its head undetected and undiscerned, seducing the body at large. In addition, each church will have a basis for comfort in waiving any examination of visiting presbyterian members in its proper responsibility for participation in the Lord's Supper.

The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 and the Westminster catechetical standards (Larger and Shorter Catechisms) highlight the doctrinal distinctives from the Word of God necessary for the rightful ordering of our Reformed heritage. Certainly, the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht are agreeable for church use, being subordinated to the Westminster Standards (especially if any allegation is made of conflict in their use).

In addition, we recognize the call of God in this age of Reformation to expound a greater maturity in creedal formation in the light of such pressures and necessities for the understanding and edification of God's people. Thus, our Book of Church Government recognizes the right of each local congregation and/or the presbyteries or general assemblies at large, to write additional creedal standards and constitutions from time to time.

The holy calling of that form of church government historically referenced as "presbyterianism" is the one frame of government designed by God best suited to facilitate the many powers and responsibilities of the Church "the pillar and ground of the truth".

All is offered in the hope and expectation that, despite our lamentable unprofitableness, the Lord Christ Jesus, our lawful and only Mediator between God and man, will be pleased to bless and keep such a church well-ordered in an age of schism, well-protected in a world of detractors and persecutors, well-enlightened in an age of darkness and above all, submissive and obedient to the revealed Will of her

Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church — By-Laws: Principles and Practice of Church Life

- 1 Divine Husband as expressed in His Holy Word, which is the Standard by which all other standards are
- 2 to be judged.
- 3
- 4

1 **CHAPTER 1**

2 **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE KING AND COVENANT HEAD OF HIS CHURCH**

3 SECTION 1. Jesus Christ is the King³ and Covenant Head of His beloved Church⁴. It pleased the Father
4 to give an inheritance to His Son, whose right it is to receive a kingdom. That King, ruling from His
5 throne in heaven, is declared to "rule over all"⁵ on earth including "all people, nations, and
6 languages."⁶ This kingdom is entrusted to One, even Jesus our Lord, who is called "Wonderful,
7 Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace", and of the increase of such
8 government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to order
9 and establish it... forever.⁷ Having all authority and power given to Him by His Father, He is above all
10 principalities, authorities and powers, having demonstrated such authority by His death and
11 resurrection from the dead⁸. Unto the authority of His Name every knee shall bow and every tongue
12 shall confess Him Lord⁹. He received such authority as has "put all things under His feet" and the
13 Father has given Him to be "the Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of
14 Him that filleth all in all"¹⁰; and being ascended far above all the heavens, he has "received gifts for
15 men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, so that the LORD God" (the Holy Spirit) "might dwell *among*
16 *them*."¹¹

17 SECTION 2. Jesus Christ rules His Church by His Word and Spirit.¹² As the only Mediator between
18 God and man¹³, such mediation includes all the offices and government in His Church. "It belongs to
19 His majesty from His throne of glory not only to rule His Church directly but also to use the ministry
20 of men in ruling and teaching His Church through His Word and Spirit, thus exercising through men
21 His own authority and enforcing His own laws. The authority of all such ministerial office rests upon
22 His appointment, who has ordained government in His Church, revealed its nature in His Word, and
23 promised His presence in the midst of His Church as this government is exercised in His Name."¹⁴

24 SECTION 3. The rule of Christ's kingdom on earth is exercised (when human agency is utilized) through
25 His royal priesthood, declared a "kingdom of priests"¹⁵ in both Testaments and such are the specific
26 (human) representatives of His Will among all nations. His royal priesthood consists of all true
27 saints¹⁶ (true believers) and none else (though there be many who consider themselves Christian but
28 are, in reality, enemies of Christ and obstructions to covenantal ministry, progress and edification¹⁷)
29 and is a function, by calling of God, of Christ's unique Mediatorial Office. God, alone, and not any
30 mere man, knows who among the church visible is truly of such a priesthood.

31 Nevertheless, as a royal priesthood by calling, such Christians alone among men are honored by God
32 as the true representatives of His Will, God giving this honor to no other persons. To them is given the

³ Isa 9:7.

⁴ Eph 5:23; Col 1:18.

⁵ Psa 103:19.

⁶ Dan 7:14.

⁷ Isa 9:6-7.

⁸ Eph 1:20-21.

⁹ Php 2:10-11.

¹⁰ Eph 1:22-23.

¹¹ Psa 68:18.

¹² Isa 59:21.

¹³ 1Ti 2:5.

¹⁴ Orthodox Presbyterian Church Book of Order p. 2 caps added.

¹⁵ Exo 19:6; 1Pe 2:5.

¹⁶ WCF 25:1.

¹⁷ Mat 7:23.

1 command to pray that God's Will be done "on earth, as it is (established) in heaven." This mandate
2 instructs them that their calling, corporately, will bring, by His command and the Holy Spirit's leading
3 and empowerment, the rule and triumph of His Will on the earth even as God's Will is gloriously
4 revealed to be triumphant in Heaven.¹⁸ As His representatives in their many relations (family,
5 marriage, brotherhood, business, neighbor, citizen, covenant member) their prayers and petitions are
6 heard¹⁹, their worship and praises received²⁰, their disciplines binding²¹, their teaching enlightening²²,
7 their obedience honored²³ and their promises confirmed when faithfully undertaken according to the
8 holiness enjoined *by* the Word and in conformity *to* —God's Word, and empowered by the Spirit's
9 direct authority and oversight as commissioned by the Father and Son. As priests they represent God
10 to man and man to God in their prayers, petitions, worship, praises, disciplines, teachings, obedience
11 and promises²⁴. This honor have all the saints of God, His true believers of all generations.²⁵

12 SECTION 4. Such a priesthood, though a calling of all of God's people, is not an office in the
13 government of the Church of God and may not be allowed to usurp the specific ministerial calling of
14 some so ordained unto church office. Such a sin led to Korah's rebellion²⁶ and Miriam's (along with
15 Aaron's) condemnation²⁷, God thus disallowing any claim to a false "equality" to obviate His specific
16 ordinations of office. The church is the specific government given by God, in both testaments²⁸,
17 ordained unto the instruction, edification and discipline of the saints and their families, along with the
18 nations at large, and, in our era, is given such officers as are called forth in the New Testament.²⁹

19 SECTION 5. Christ has ordered such a priesthood of believers to form churches for the proper ordering
20 of His kingdom.³⁰ For any Christian to remain aloof from the church visible in worship and
21 membership is to sin grievously against the Lord and fail at Christian calling³¹. The church is erected
22 by God as the visible representative government of God's kingdom, being the primary means used by
23 God to call forth His people to their priestly duties, individually and corporately.³² Thus, it stands in a
24 unique position to be able to instruct God's representative priesthood, the family and the culture at
25 large, even bearing the responsibility of decrying the evils of government in family, business, church
26 and civil ministry while counseling and teaching the same governments³³ their proper responsibilities
27 to God and obedience to His kingdom designs.³⁴

28 SECTION 6. Presbyterianism is not necessary for the "being" of any single church, but it is necessary
29 for the "well-being" of the church and the churches at large. Thus, God may raise up a church which is
30 independent from others and still be a true church. Yet, its well-being, preservation and calling will be
31 harmed as well as its ability to root transgenerationally if it does not covenant presbyterially as

18 Mat 6:10.

19 Joh 14:13-14; Psa 4:3; 1Pe 3:12.

20 Psa 9:1-2; Psa 22:26 – speaks of giving praise and worship, not God receiving it. Wrong footnotes.

21 Mat 18:15-16 (should be Mat 18:18-19).

22 Deu 6:6-9.

23 Exo 20:6; Deu 7:9.

24 Exo 19:6; 1Pe 2:5; 1Th 1:2-3; Psa 135:1-3.

25 Psa 149:1-9.

26 Num 16:1-3.

27 Num 12:1-10.

28 Heb 2:12. Paul's use of the term "church" in the Old Testament cf. Psa 22:22, 25.

29 WCF 25:3; WLC 63; Mat 28:19-20.

30 WCF 25:1-2; 1Th 5:11.

31 Heb 10:24-25.

32 Outside of His Church there is no ordinary means of salvation. WCF 25:2; BC 28

33 This in no way is meant to justify an Erastian view of church-state relations.

34 Psa 148:5-13; 1Ti 2:1-2.

1 Scripture demands.³⁵ Thus, Presbyterianism is necessary for the maturity of the church, but it is not
2 essential to the existence of the church visible.

3

4

³⁵ Deu 1; Act 15.

1 **CHAPTER 2**
2 **THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST³⁶**

3 SECTION 1. Christ has ascended³⁷ and is exalted at the right hand of His Father. He has been pleased
4 to send His Spirit to apply the work of His glory and holiness in this world, thus rebuking the world of
5 sin, righteousness, and judgment.³⁸ Unto that end, the Church of Christ was ordained "as the pillar
6 and support of the truth."³⁹

7 SECTION 2. The universal Church visible consists of all baptized persons who profess a saving faith in
8 Jesus Christ, along with their baptized children, in every nation and culture and who abide in
9 submission to the Word of God.⁴⁰

10 SECTION 3. The universal Church visible is called by God to be organized in local churches and
11 regional presbyteries. Such presbyteries are properly called churches in their representative capacities,
12 confessing a common faith and covenanting together under the governance of such presbyterian union.

13 SECTION 4. Presbytery derives its authority from Scripture.⁴¹ The Law of God stipulates that in
14 ecclesiastical government, there are problems which extend beyond the ability and/or discernment of
15 any local government, thus calling forth the need for specialized adjudication and the mutual aid and
16 discernments of other churches and officers.

17 SECTION 5. Such presbyterian church government may, when necessary, organize churches (a
18 minimum of at least three churches) of a region into a regional presbytery, with all of such presbyteries
19 (a minimum of at least two) being formed into a synodical presbytery, and all of such synodical
20 presbyteries (a minimum of at least two)⁴² being organized into an American presbytery.⁴³
21 Adjudicated matters are the only areas where the broader assemblies may make decisions that are
22 settled and binding when the appellate process has been exhausted. Advice and counsel is a right of
23 regional presbytery but is not binding upon the churches unless settled by adjudication.⁴⁴

24 SECTION 6. The local church is designed and called by God to be the fundamental unit of authority in
25 the presbyterian system of government. Its rights, responsibilities, and callings may not be bypassed
26 nor otherwise usurped by any other church or presbyterial authority. It is the church of original
27 jurisdiction in all cases whatsoever except those noted in this Book of Church Government and the
28 Directory of Discipline. The local church is designed by God to provide for the following callings and
29 responsibilities: the establishment of a covenantal ordering of the body of believers and officers (with
30 help and advice of regional presbytery);⁴⁵ the faithful preaching of the whole counsel of Scripture with

³⁶ WCF 25.

³⁷ Eph 1:20.

³⁸ Joh 16:8.

³⁹ 1Ti 3:15.

⁴⁰ WCF 27:2; WLC 62; Gen 17:7; Gal 3:7-9.

⁴¹ Deu 1:13-17.

⁴² Act 15:23; The preponderance in Scripture of the peculiar expression "two or three" with respect to witnesses and testimonies can lead to the conclusion that judicial/covenantal authority and its creation are characterized constantly by such testimony. Invariably, where the expression "two or three" is found, governance and oversight is being exercised. Deu 19:15, (See also 19:7-9 where there are two sets of three cities set for judicial investigation and refuge.) See also Mat 18:16, 20; Mar 14:30.

⁴³ Perhaps the model in Exo 18:21-22, 25-26 and Deu 1:15-17 where "tens, fifties, hundreds, thousands" describes appellate jurisdictions will become the model for use once the initial transition from weakness to strength, from no presbytery to a strong presbytery, takes place. In the mean time, "where two or three are gathered in my name" will suffice for forming the presbyterian system.

⁴⁴ Act 15:2.

⁴⁵ footnote needed.

1 a thorough expounding of the Law of God as a foundation for ethics, counsel, rule and hermeneutical
2 principles;⁴⁶ the reading and teaching of God's Word;⁴⁷ the rightful administration of the sacraments
3 of baptism⁴⁸ and the Lord's Table;⁴⁹ the proper ordering of worship before the Throne of God on the
4 Lord's Day sabbath as well as any other stated services, ministries, and gatherings;⁵⁰ the fellowship of
5 a particular church family and the mutual edification of the members;⁵¹ the call to prayer, praise, and
6 fasting;⁵² the collecting and distribution of the tithes and offerings;⁵³ the application of works of
7 mercy;⁵⁴ the proper oversight and counsel of God's people;⁵⁵ the faithful application of discipline;⁵⁶
8 the establishment of covenantal union within a presbyterian system;⁵⁷ the public testimony of
9 righteousness;⁵⁸ and blessing the people.⁵⁹

10 SECTION 7. The all-consuming, comprehensive goal of the being of the Church of Christ throughout
11 the world is to glorify God by leading men to the adoration of the glorious Trinity, to expound His
12 revealed will in the Bible, to make visible the invisible governance of God in the world,⁶⁰ and to
13 testify of the defeat of His adversary and ours, Satan with his minions, hosts, philosophies, standards,
14 usurped governments, and works of unrighteousness.⁶¹ Each church and presbyterian system of
15 governance must strive with utmost strength to contribute toward the attainment of such a
16 comprehensive goal.

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⁴⁶ WCF 21:5; WLC 155, 158-160.

⁴⁷ WCF 21:5; WLC 155-157, 159; 2Ti 4:2.

⁴⁸ WCF 28:1

⁴⁹ WCF 21:5; 28:1; 29:1-3.

⁵⁰ WCF 21.

⁵¹ Heb 10:25; 1Co 12:1-27.

⁵² WCF 21:3, 5.

⁵³ Deu 14:28-29; Mal 3:10; 1Co 16:1-3.

⁵⁴ Lev 19:9-10; 14-15; Mar 3:1-5; Act 6:1-3; 1Co 12:28; WCF 21:8.

⁵⁵ 1Pe 5: 1-3; Heb 13:7.

⁵⁶ Mat 18:15-17; 1Co 5.

⁵⁷ Deu 1:13-17; Act 15.

⁵⁸ footnote needed.

⁵⁹ footnote needed.

⁶⁰ WCF 1:1; WLC 1; Mat 6:10.

⁶¹ Col 2:15; Rom 16:20.

1 **CHAPTER 3**
2 **CHURCH POWER**

- 3 SECTION 1. The source of church authority is Jesus Christ, upon whom she is founded as her Rock.⁶²
4 Officers of the church receive their authority, not from men, but from God Himself.⁶³ As such, she
5 exercises a spiritual power over men,⁶⁴ meaning that her power is exercised primarily in her sway over
6 the soul⁶⁵ and its consequent governance of the body and stewardship of the believer.⁶⁶
- 7 SECTION 2. There is a threefold power in the church by which the officers exercise jurisdiction,
8 guidance, and order. The threefold power the "*potestas dogmatica*" (Section 3),⁶⁷ the "*potestas*
9 "*gubernans*" (Section 4)⁶⁸ and the "*potestas misericordiae*" (Section 5).⁶⁹
- 10 SECTION 3. The *potestas dogmatica* is a divine task wherein the church has a duty to the truth. As
11 such, she is a witness to those without, and a witness and teacher to those within the church.⁷⁰ She
12 exercises this power several ways. First, she preserves the Word of God from error and expounds its
13 content from a diligent search of its internally established, God inspired meaning.⁷¹ Second, she
14 testifies to the truth by the rightful administration of the ordinances, that is to say, the preaching of the
15 Word and administration of the sacraments.⁷² Third, she frames her confessions with precision as
16 derived expositions of the Word.⁷³ Fourth, she cultivates the study of theology and ethics.⁷⁴
- 17 SECTION 4. The *potestas gubernans* is a divine task wherein the church regulates and governs its
18 affairs so that "all things are done decently and in order."⁷⁵ As such, the church carries into effect all
19 the laws commanded by God to the church. In addition, numerous occasions arise in which she must
20 make enactments or regulations in order to apply the precepts of God properly to the specific situations
21 in which God has placed her. In order to accomplish the administration of "order and decency", she is
22 given authority to guard the holiness of the church by admitting those who are approved and by
23 excluding those who live dishonorably and impenitently or who depart from the truth.⁷⁶
- 24 SECTION 5. The *potestas misericordiae* is a divine task wherein the Lord commands the church to
25 make provision for her poor as a first responsibility⁷⁷ and afterwards, to go to the poor and bring them
26 the means of charity and benevolence according to the manner prescribed in God's Laws. Such charity
27 and benevolence would include the administration of the Word.⁷⁸ By such means, the church engages

⁶² Deu 32:6; Mat 16:18.

⁶³ 1Ti 3.

⁶⁴ Mat 16:18-19.

⁶⁵ Gal 5:22-25.

⁶⁶ Rom 12:1-2; 1Ti 3:15-16.

⁶⁷ Act 5:42.

⁶⁸ 1Ti 3.

⁶⁹ Act 6:1-3.

⁷⁰ Mat 28:18-20.

⁷¹ Psa 147:19-20; Act 7:38; Rom 3:1-2; 2Ti 3:16-17.

⁷² Mat 16:18-19; 2Ti 3:16; 4:2; WCF 21:5; 28:1, 5; 29:1-3; WLC 159.

⁷³ Act 15: 23-32, WCF 31:3.

⁷⁴ 2Ti 3:16; Psa 19:7-11; 119:97-100.

⁷⁵ 1Co 14:40.

⁷⁶ Mat 16:18-19; 1Co 5; 11:34; Gal 1:8; Tit 1:5.

⁷⁷ Deu 15:7-11; Gal 6:10.

⁷⁸ Act 6:1-7.

1 in acts of mercy which tend to the debilitation of Satan's kingdom, divesting its usurped, predatory
2 governments of any deceitful cloak of goodness and tenderness.⁷⁹

3 SECTION 6. The church of Christ has such power and authority as is given to her, vested in the whole
4 body of members and not in its officers alone. Each believer-priest⁸⁰ is endued with the Spirit of the
5 Living God and is called by Christ to join in the worship, edification and testimony of the church.
6 Each church functions and grows as the body of Christ, fitly-framed and fashioned together, according
7 to the working of Him who works in every member to supply a due measure of each part.⁸¹

8 SECTION 7. The power of the body of believers in each congregation includes the authority to both
9 desire and call special offices and the officers who would attend to them. Such oversight as is vested in
10 the officers of the particular church is discharged by those whom the members of the congregation call
11 to such authority by a vote of the congregation.⁸² However, the congregation is responsible before
12 God to vote into office such men as are fit for office.⁸³

13 SECTION 8. The elders (called in Scripture *presbyters*) of the church are the only governors of the
14 church and, corporately, are called the congregational presbytery (session, consistory) of the church.
15 The congregational presbytery consists of the minister (teaching elder) and ruling elders of the church.
16 The members of the congregational presbytery alone are to represent the church in presbyterian,
17 synodical presbyteries, and general assemblies.⁸⁴

18 SECTION 9. The government of the church is given in Scripture as the rule by the elders of the
19 particular church. Their joint jurisdiction in church and presbyterian assemblies is set forth in both
20 Testaments. It is organized and administered according to the pattern set forth in the New Testament,
21 with precedents derived in the Old Testament, particular attention being given to the principles of holy
22 conduct and rule established in the Law of God (Pentateuch).⁸⁵

23 SECTION 10. The organization of courts, both courts of original jurisdiction and courts of appellate
24 jurisdiction, is set forth in the Word of God. Such courts are empowered to adjudicate according to the
25 derived authority vested in the churches, given by the Covenant Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.⁸⁶

26 SECTION 11. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and
27 commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith,
28 or worship."⁸⁷ In this we find the precept expressed that all church power is only ministerial, not
29 being independent nor sovereign in its exercise of power. It is also declarative of ultimate Authority
30 as expressed by God in His Word, the Scriptures alone being the only infallible and inerrant rule of
31 faith and practice.⁸⁸ No church authority may adjudicate matters on the basis of its own man-made
32 rules and authority but must bind the conscience by making decisions derived from the Scriptures.⁸⁹

⁷⁹ Pro 12:10.

⁸⁰ See DCO 1:4.

⁸¹ 1Co 12.

⁸² Voting members must be communicant members of the local congregation. The session of each church will determine which communicant members shall vote.

⁸³ Deu 1:13-18; 1Ti 3; Tit 2; 1Pe 5:1-4; Psa 15:1-5.

⁸⁴ Deu 1:13-18; Exo 3:16-18; Act 15; 1Ti 4:14; Rom 12:7-8 (ruling); 1Co 12:28; Tit 1: 5.

⁸⁵ Exo 3:16, 18; Deu 1:13-16; Rom 15: 4; 2Ti 3:15-17.

⁸⁶ Deu 1:13-17; Act 15 (be more specific).

⁸⁷ WCF 20:2.

⁸⁸ WCF

⁸⁹ Deu 4:2; 12:32; Rev 22:18-19.

1 SECTION 12. No church officers or judicatories possess any civil jurisdiction.⁹⁰ No civil penalties
2 derived from the culture at large may be inflicted in a church court or by church officer(s).⁹¹ No aid
3 from a civil authority may be sought by any officer or authority in the presbyterian system "in the
4 exercise of their jurisdiction further than may be necessary for civil protection and security."⁹²

5 SECTION 13. Presbytery may not lay claim to the properties, lands, buildings, parsonages or other
6 assets owned by the individual churches, members, or officers. No act of discipline (or otherwise) of
7 presbytery may be construed as a claim to the title, ownership of the properties, lands, buildings,
8 parsonages or other assets owned by the individual churches, members, or officers.

9 SECTION 14. Church government is a valid and authentic jurisdiction, derived from God's Word, and
10 every member is commanded by God to submit to its authority as an obedience offered to Christ.⁹³
11 Indeed, God has ordained that persons are tested by God by the manner in which they respond to their
12 neighbor, in general, and to derived authority in particular.⁹⁴ This certainly includes the church's
13 authority and government, as well as civil government and parental authority. Therefore, if the
14 decisions of the church officers are rendered according to the precepts of Scripture then they "are to be
15 received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the
16 power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word."⁹⁵

17

⁹⁰ 1Ti 3:14-15; cf. 1Ti 2-3 Distinctions are made in civil, home and church authority.

⁹¹ Psa 10:2-7, WCF 31:2, 5; Luk 12:13-14; Joh 18:36.

⁹² OPC Book of Order p. 6; 2Ch 26:16-21.

⁹³ 1Ti 5:17; Heb 13:7; Tit 3:1.

⁹⁴ Lev 19:18; Mat 5:43-48; 19:16-24; 22:39-40; Rom13:8-10.

⁹⁵ WCF 31:2; (put in Bible footnotes from WCF section); Num 11:14-17; Act 15 (be specific).

1 **CHAPTER 4**

2 **THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

3 SECTION 1. The church of Christ is one Body with her Lord, even as a husband and his wife are one.⁹⁶
4 Such unity is achieved through the operations of the Holy Spirit who dwells in both, thus
5 demonstrating similar dispositions and aims in the saints as in the Lord.⁹⁷ Because of the oneness of
6 the saints with their Lord, the saints have a covenanted unity among themselves, whereby, being united
7 to the same Head,⁹⁸ and having the same Spirit dwelling in them,⁹⁹ they have the same graces of faith,
8 hope, love, etc. and are rooted and grounded in the same doctrines of Christ, and have a mutual
9 affection to, and care for one another.¹⁰⁰ Christians must, therefore, utilize the gifts given to them for
10 the edification of the church as faithful stewards.¹⁰¹ However, proper honor must be accorded to those
11 who, by calling of office, rule and teach the church, so as to maintain peace in the body, without
12 compromising the purity of the church.¹⁰² The beauty and edification which the church has with her
13 Lord and with one another is like the oil which flowed down Aaron's beard¹⁰³ from his covenanted
14 consecration as High Priest . Such beauty of the body as the fellowship the saints enjoy with Christ
15 must be maintained in the church by church governments, seeking always to obviate schism which is
16 an abomination to God,¹⁰⁴ without compromising the integrity of the truth.

17 SECTION 2. There are many antichrists,¹⁰⁵ false prophets and false shepherds in the world.¹⁰⁶ Against
18 these corruption's of Satan the church must bear constant testimony, warning the people of God while
19 understanding that any who persevere in following such corruption cannot be regarded as true
20 Christians.¹⁰⁷ Communion with such corruption is adultery in the spiritual sense and is abominable to
21 God for the deceits such ones perpetrate and the judgment which would be brought upon the church if
22 she compromises with them in doctrine,¹⁰⁸ organization,¹⁰⁹ covenant,¹¹⁰ or ethic.¹¹¹ The church must
23 remain separate in doctrine, organization, covenant, and ethic, as it is Satan's chief strategy to cause
24 the church to unite with such subtleties, thus counterfeiting the truth and God's Will to assume the
25 Name of the "church" while corrupting it as his own.¹¹² The church is Christ's wife and must not
26 respond to any but her own Husband's divine voice, therefore the church must exercise discipline,
27 maintain orderliness, preserve purity, and seek maturity in the application of His Word.¹¹³

⁹⁶ Eph 5:31-32.

⁹⁷ Joh 17:5-24.

⁹⁸ Eph 1:22.

⁹⁹ footnote, one spirit.

¹⁰⁰ Joh 17:6-26 (weak, more needed).

¹⁰¹ Rom 12:3-13.

¹⁰² 1Ti 5:17; 1Pe 5:1-3; Heb 13:7.

¹⁰³ Psa 133:1-2.

¹⁰⁴ Pro 6:16-19.

¹⁰⁵ The pope is that Anti-Christ in the sense that no other long standing office claiming to be Christ on earth exists. He is also "an" antichrist as well and thus those who hold that he is only "an" antichrist will be accepted for fellowship in the presbytery. (See Const. I,B,1,a, 1Jo 4:3).

¹⁰⁶ 2Pe 2:1-22; Jud 11-19; Mat 7:15; 1Jo 4:1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Gal 5:19-21.

¹⁰⁸ Jud 11-19.

¹⁰⁹ 1Co 10:15-23 (for covenant???? Does not make sense).

¹¹⁰ Mat 12:25-27.

¹¹¹ Lev 17:7; Deu 32:17-18; Psa 106:34-40.

¹¹² Rev 2:9; 3:9; Mat 7:21-23.

¹¹³ Eph 5:23-29; Joh 10:27 (more needed).

1 SECTION 3. "The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error;¹¹⁴ and have so
2 degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, there shall
3 be always a church on earth to worship God according to His Will."¹¹⁶
4

¹¹⁴ 1Co 13:12; Rev 2 & 30; Mat 13:24-28.

¹¹⁵ Rev 2:9; 3:9; 18:2 and in WCF.

¹¹⁶ WCF 25:5; Mat 13:28-30; 16:18 ; Psa 102:28; Isa 1:9.

1 **CHAPTER 5**
2 **OFFICES OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

3 SECTION 1. The church of Christ is established upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles.¹¹⁷

4 The apostles were ordained to be witnesses of the resurrected Lord Jesus, bearing testimony by the
5 empowering of the Holy Spirit to the things which they had seen and heard, thus establishing the
6 foundations of the Christian Church, and beginning its public testimony to a lost world.¹¹⁸ They spoke
7 and wrote by revelation from God, writing the New Testament as the fullness of inspired truth.¹¹⁹

8 When their calling was complete, and the foundations of the Church secured, their office was not
9 continued in the Church and the signs and powers of the apostolate ceased.¹²⁰ There were some who
10 were designated apostles who were not apostles by office, yet were sent to perform some temporary
11 function, as requested by the church.¹²¹

12 SECTION 2. The officers which Christ has appointed for the edification of His church and the
13 perfecting of the saints are either extra-ordinary, being given to the Church for the age of its infancy
14 and are since ceased, or ordinary and given to the Church as perpetual. Those extra-ordinary offices
15 (now ceased) are apostles, prophets, and evangelists.¹²² Those ordinary and perpetual officers are
16 pastor, elders, deacons, and teachers.¹²³

17 SECTION 3. God has been pleased to build His church through the ministry of men and, as such, He
18 calls and provides some with special gifts for teaching, preaching, ruling and serving such government
19 of the church.¹²⁴ Some such gifts are only exercised most profitably when duly called by the church
20 into official capacity.¹²⁵ Such officers in the presbyterian system are minister of the Word, (pastor,
21 missionary, teaching elder, doctor) ruling elder, and deacon.¹²⁶

22 SECTION 4. The ordinary and perpetual offices in the local church are held by minister of the Word,
23 ruling elder and deacon.¹²⁷ Within the economy of the office of eldership, there are two distinctive
24 callings. The ministry of the Word of God is given to the minister of the Word, also called the pastor
25 or teaching elder who administers the Word of God regularly in the church (preaching, teaching,
26 training, theological development and expertise, counseling) and the sacraments.¹²⁸ The ruling
27 functions are primarily given to the ruling elders, who share such oversight with the minister of the
28 Word.¹²⁹ The office of deacon is that office established by Christ which administers works of mercy
29 on behalf of the church.¹³⁰

117 Eph 2:20.

118 Heb 1:1-2; 2:3-4.

119 (Note re: removing Joh 14:26, does not have to do with writing & speaking, but understanding); 2Ti 3:15-16; 2Pe 1:19-20;
1Th 2:13.

120 Heb 1:1-2; 1Co 13:8-10.

121 Act 6:8, 8:4-7 (deacons no longer waiting tables but promoted to evangelists [assistant apostle] and doing preaching, signs
and wonders); 2Ti 4:5.

122 Eph 4:11-12; Heb 1:1-2.

123 Eph 4:11-12; cf. 1Ti 3; Jam 3:1 (teachers/ministers); 1Pe 5:1-3 (elder/presbyter), Rom 12:7-8 (rulers), 1Co 12:28
(governors).

124 Rom 12:7-8; Eph 4:11-12.

125 1Co 9:13-14; 1Ti 5:17-22; Heb 13:7, 17, 24.

126 1Ti 3:8-13.

127 1Ti 3; Rom 12:7-8; 1Co 12:28 (ruling, governors).

128 1Co 11:17-30 (esp. 23-30); 2Ti 2:15; 2Co 5:20 with 1Co 1:21.

129 1Ti 5:17; Heb 13:7, 17, 24.

130 Act 6:1-3; 1Ti 3:10-13.

1 **CHAPTER 6**

2 **MINISTER, PASTOR, TEACHING ELDER, OR DOCTOR**

3 SECTION 1. The pastor is an ordinary and perpetual officer in the church.¹³¹ It belongs to the office of
4 the pastor:

- 5 1) To pray for the sick, in private or in public, to which a blessing is promised.¹³²
- 6 2) To read the Scriptures publicly.¹³³
- 7 3) To officiate in the Lord's Day (sabbath) worship (mornings and evenings when both or either
8 are stated services of the church).¹³⁴
- 9 4) To dispense the Word, being charged by God to preach and thus feed the flock over which
10 God has made him an overseer. To feed the flock by the faithful preaching of the Word is, by
11 the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring the Word of the Lord to bear upon the conscience by
12 means of teaching, convincing, reproving, exhorting, and comforting.¹³⁵
- 13 5) To catechize the congregation which is a part of preaching.¹³⁶
- 14 6) To dispense other divine mysteries in counseling, rule, discernment, prayer, leadership,
15 writing and other pastoral stewardships.¹³⁷
- 16 7) To administer the sacraments on a regular basis.¹³⁸
- 17 8) To bless the people from God.¹³⁹
- 18 9) To help the needy.¹⁴⁰
- 19 10) To represent the church before presbyterial assemblies.¹⁴¹
- 20 11) To counsel civil magistrates when requested to do so.¹⁴²

21 SECTION 2. The pastor who fills this office shall be sound in the faith, possess competency in human
22 learning and be able to teach and rule others. He should be known for sobriety, a man of wisdom and
23 discretion. He should exhibit the dignity of a holy life and rule well his house. He should have a
24 good report of those who are without.¹⁴³ To that end, churches are strongly urged to use the *Checklist*
25 *For Church Officers* found in Appendix A as part of their qualification and examination process for

131 Jer 2:8; 3:15; 17:16; 23:1; Eph4:11-12.

132 Psa 35:13; Neh 8:6.

133 Neh 8:2-7.

134 Neh 8:3-8.

135 Eze 7:6, 10; Neh 8:2-8; 2Ti 2:14-15, 3:15-16; 4:2; Act 20:27-28; 2Co 5:18-20 (cp. 1Co 1:21); Joh 21:15-17.

136 2Ti 3:15-16; 4:2.

137 1Ti 6:11-21; Note the functions which Timothy is required as a pastor to perform.

138 1Co 10:15-17; 11:19-27.

139 Neh 8:6; Num 6:24-26; 2Co 1:2; 13:14.

140 1Ti 3:2-7; 5:16; Tit 1:8.

141 Act 15:30-36.

142 Eze 7:10, 12-14, 21-27; 10:2-3; WCF 31:5.

143 1Ti 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9.

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1 Teaching Elders whether they be ordained or seeking ordination. Every candidate for office shall set
2 forth in writing any exceptions/scruples they have that are not already allowed by Const. I,B, 1 or 2
3 and be prepared to abide by the provisions of DCO 31.

4 SECTION 3. Every pastor shall be a member of a regional presbytery and of a local congregational
5 presbytery which is a member of the same regional presbytery.¹⁴⁴ An assistant pastor, while a member
6 of a local congregational presbytery, does not thereby have a vote in that presbytery, however, he may
7 be designated as a congregational representative to a broader presbytery, and may serve on any
8 committees or as an officer thereof .

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¹⁴⁴ Deu 1:13-17; cf. Deu 12:12, 19; 18:6-8; Act 15; Tit 1:5-9 (seems a little weak—firm up).

CHAPTER 7
MISSIONARIES

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3 SECTION 1. Missionaries are ministers of the Word who preach the Word, administer the sacraments
4 and undertake all the functions that belong to the office of the pastor (though he be free from a pastoral
5 charge in a particular flock) so as to bring in other sheep. His ministry shall continue in a place until a
6 congregation shall have been regularly organized.¹⁴⁵

7 SECTION 2. As a minister of the word, the missionary is authorized to perform the following functions:
8 labors in home or foreign mission fields, chaplains in the armed forces or other institutions, a stated
9 pulpit supply or special preacher to the churches, an editor or similar ministry involving media
10 communications.¹⁴⁶ A minister of the word is given the special authority of a missionary from his
11 overseeing congregational presbytery.

12 SECTION 3. The missionary may, with the approval of his overseeing congregational presbytery,
13 receive members into the church, which is being organized under his call, as well as appoint ruling
14 elders and deacons.¹⁴⁷

15

¹⁴⁵ Act 15:30-35; Tit 1:5; (many more, find them).

¹⁴⁶ Act 8:4-8; 10:34-48; 18:24-19:1; cf. 1Co 3:5-6.

¹⁴⁷ Tit 1:1-5; Note: It is apparent from the testimony of Scripture that until the apostolic office came to an end, the apostles acted as the presbyterian adjudicatory until such authority was in place. The same principle was true in the Old Testament economy in that, prior to the establishment of elders among the tribes, the patriarchs were the highest adjudicatory. It is apparent that at some point during their stay in Egypt as a people, eldership in Israel among the tribes replaced patriarchal authority as the supreme adjudicatory (Exo 4:13; 24:1,9).

CHAPTER 8
RULING ELDERS

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- 3 SECTION 1. Even as the Lord ordained in the Old Covenant that the Levites joined with the elders in
4 the governance of the people, so it is that God has given gifts to some in the New Covenant to exercise
5 rule in the local congregational presbytery along with the pastor. Such men hold office as ruling elders
6 and may not assume the duties given to the pastor except as requested by him and approved by the
7 regional presbytery, as may be necessary for good order.¹⁴⁸
- 8 SECTION 2. The ruling elder may be licensed by the regional presbytery to exhort (i.e. to speak a word
9 of edification) in a duly constituted worship service where Christ rules through two or more elders, at
10 least one of which should ordinarily be present.¹⁴⁹
- 11 SECTION 3. By approbation of the local congregation, elders must be chosen from among that
12 congregation over which they will preside in authority. Such elders must be men fitted for office as
13 given in Scripture¹⁵⁰ To that end, churches are urged to use the *Checklist For Church Officers* found
14 in Appendix A as part of their qualification and examination process for Ruling Elders. Every
15 candidate for office shall set forth in writing any exceptions/scruples they have that are not already
16 allowed by Const. I,B, 1 or 2 and be prepared to abide by the provisions of DCO 31.
- 17 SECTION 4. The modern tendency in the churches is to demean this office, especially in preference to
18 the pastor. The ruling elders as a body constitute the primary authority which represents the flock to
19 which the pastor is responsible, under God.¹⁵¹
- 20 SECTION 5 Elders should pray with and for their people, attend to the sick, mourn with those who
21 mourn, watch over the heritage of the Lord- the children of the church- being concerned for their
22 instruction and nourishing.¹⁵² Finally, they must have a concern for the doctrine and conduct of the
23 pastor, helping him in his labors.¹⁵³
- 24

¹⁴⁸ Rom 12:7-8 (ruling); 1Co 12:28 (governments); 1Ti 5:17.

¹⁴⁹ This section was changed at 07-2009 American Presbytery. See Minutes 13 B on DCO 8..

¹⁵⁰ Deu 1:5-18; and Psa 15; ITi 3:1-7.

¹⁵¹ Heb 13:7, 17.

¹⁵² Exo 12:21-42, need more references.

¹⁵³ Num 11:16-17.

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**CHAPTER 9
THE DEACONS**

SECTION 1. The office of the deacon is called forth into the ministry of mercy of the local church. Such works of mercy are responsible for the care of members of the church who stand destitute of help, especially widows who are widows indeed,¹⁵⁴ as well as individuals who are unable to function on their own behalf due to mental or physical debilitation, and have not the care needed, especially by their families.¹⁵⁵ In addition, the congregational presbytery, which has charge of overseeing the deaconal board (all the deacons assembled and organized for their works of mercy), shall choose the field of work outside the church for the care of the poor.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the deacons shall help the families and church in other ministries of the session's choosing.¹⁵⁷ Such ministry is not to be confused as rule of the church which alone is committed to the congregational presbytery of the church.¹⁵⁸

SECTION 2. The deacon is chosen by the congregation, being nominated by the congregational presbytery,¹⁵⁹ and must fulfill the character of the deacon¹⁶⁰ To that end, churches are urged to develop their own *Checklist For Deacons* based upon some of those things appropriate to the office of deacon found in Appendix A as part of their qualification and examination process for Deacons. Every candidate for office shall set forth in writing any exceptions/scruples they have that are not already allowed by Const. I,B, 1 or 2 and be prepared to abide by the provisions of DCO 31.

SECTION 3. The deaconal board shall meet regularly to plan its ministries, shall keep a record of its proceedings, shall elect its own deaconal board officers (moderator, secretary, treasurer and/or others of its choosing in conformity with the desire of the congregational presbytery of the church).¹⁶¹

SECTION 4. The deaconal board, in keeping a record of its proceedings and finances, shall report to the congregational presbytery.¹⁶²

SECTION 5. Deacons may be called upon to counsel and teach the poor or others in works of mercy and helps as the congregational presbytery shall designate.¹⁶³

SECTION 6. When meeting with the congregational presbytery of the church in its official capacity, the two bodies together shall be called the church council.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁴ Act 6:1-3; 1Co 12:88 (helps); 1Ti 5:3-10, 16; Jam 1:27.

¹⁵⁵ 1Th 5:12-14.

¹⁵⁶ Deu 10:17-20; Luk 14:13-14; 1Co 13:3; Gal 2:10.

¹⁵⁷ Lev 19:14-15; Act 6:1-3; Gal 2:10; 6:10

¹⁵⁸ (See DCO 6 & 8).

¹⁵⁹ Act 6:1-6.

¹⁶⁰ 1Ti 3:8-11; Act 6:3 and Psa 15.

¹⁶¹ 1Co 14:40.

¹⁶² 1Co 14:40.

¹⁶³ Act 6:5-6; 1Co 12:28; 1Th 5:12-14.

¹⁶⁴ 1Co 14:40; Php 1:1; 1Ti 3.

1 **CHAPTER 10**

2 **THE VARIED ASSEMBLIES IN THE PRESBYTERIAN SYSTEM**

3 SECTION 1. The pastor is primarily under the oversight of his own congregational presbytery, rather
4 than primarily under the oversight of regional presbyteries, synodical presbyteries, or the American
5 presbytery. Generally, pastors have the love of their congregation, the trust of their ruling elders, and
6 the closeness of their people as a whole who, not only provide for his financial well-being, but provide
7 for his calling, fellowship, care, and oversight for him and that of his family. Matters pertaining to his
8 calling and person are the concern of his congregational presbytery and church, as matters of original
9 jurisdiction, unless otherwise stated in this Book of Church Government or the Directory of Discipline.

10 SECTION 2. All the governing assemblies within the presbyterian system are designed to use and
11 maintain the truth and uphold righteousness while opposing heresy and sinful practices and thus
12 strengthen the peace, purity and unity of the church.¹⁶⁵ The congregational presbytery exercises
13 authority and has jurisdiction over the local church.¹⁶⁶ The presbytery, at all levels, each only exercise
14 such authority as is delegated to them by this Book of Church Government, or such representatives as
15 authorized by the respective assemblies of the respective churches from time to time.¹⁶⁷

16 SECTION 3. Disputed matters of doctrine and discipline may be referred to a broader assembly for
17 adjudication.¹⁶⁸

18 SECTION 4. Presbyteries have the right to erect committees or special commissions and delegate to
19 them specific interim powers when necessary with time limits and specific powers¹⁶⁹ not to exceed
20 one year for any assembly broader than the congregational presbytery.¹⁷⁰

21 SECTION 5. Membership on such committees need not be limited to the membership of the appointing
22 assembly but must be limited to membership of the CRPC at large.¹⁷¹ Committees at the local church
23 level may have members from outside of the CRPC with the approval of the congregational presbytery.

24 SECTION 6. Each church is ordinarily expected to send its pastor and one elder to represent it at the
25 regional presbytery meetings that shall convene no less than once per year.¹⁷² Each officer sent will
26 have one vote in regional presbytery. If the pastor cannot attend, the church has power to authorize the
27 sending of two ruling elders.¹⁷³ No church may be denied its representation.¹⁷⁴

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¹⁶⁵ Deu. 1:13-17; Ps. 107:32; Rom 1:7; 10:15; 14:19; Eph. 4:3-4; 1 Tim. 4:12.

¹⁶⁶ Heb. 13:24. Need more. Cp. Rom. 6:1-5.

¹⁶⁷ Deu. 1:13-17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:10. Note: Paul, though exhorting them by inspired revelation as to what to do in a case of discipline, waits to forgive the individual involved until such time as the Corinthian church first forgives. The same approach is taken in Philemon where Paul instructs Philemon by inspired revelation concerning his duty yet awaits Philemon's response first and "without [his] mind I would do nothing". (Phm 14) Paul repeatedly protects local authority and as "broader authority" awaits their response before assuming to act.

¹⁶⁸ Ex. 18:24-26; Deu. 17:8-9; Acts 15.

¹⁶⁹ Acts 15:25.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Cor. 14:40.

¹⁷¹ Deu. 1:13-17.

¹⁷² 1 Tim. 5:17 Note: Both functions (teaching and ruling) of a given churches oversight should be represented at presbytery.

¹⁷³ 1 Cor. 14:40.

¹⁷⁴ Deu. 1:13, 15, Acts 15:2.

CHAPTER 11

THE ELECTION OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS

1
2
3
4 SECTION 1. Every congregation shall elect ruling elders and deacons,¹⁷⁵ except in extra-ordinary
5 circumstances.

6
7 SECTION 2. Recommendations for officers may be submitted, in written form, by any covenant
8 member of the church¹⁷⁶ or by a broader presbytery, to the congregational presbytery for consideration.

9
10 SECTION 3. The congregational presbytery alone has power to present men as nominees for office in
11 that local congregation.¹⁷⁷

12
13 SECTION 4. It is necessary that before any man be elected to, or ordained and installed into, the office
14 of elder or deacon that he should first be tried and proved by the congregational presbytery of the church
15 wherein service is anticipated, because hands are not to be laid suddenly upon any,¹⁷⁸ and both elders and
16 deacons must be of honest and good report.¹⁷⁹ Such examination must include an understanding of the
17 whole counsel of God, the Confession and its Catechisms, this Book of Church Government, and the
18 constitution and any other covenants of said church.¹⁸⁰

19
20 SECTION 5. If the congregational presbytery is satisfied with the tested individual(s), then his (their)
21 name(s) will be brought to the congregation which then votes upon his (their) nomination.¹⁸¹

22
23 SECTION 6. A man must receive three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the voting members present. Such balloting
24 must always be by secret written ballot. No votes shall be taken by proxy. If there are no elders of the
25 church then the overseeing congregational presbytery shall choose who shall preside over all
26 congregational meetings until such time as the church has officers of its own calling.

27
28 SECTION 7. The call to office for an elder or deacon will be for the length of time that the officer
29 remains a member in good standing of the local church, or petitions congregational presbytery for relief
30 of his office and that with good cause.
31

1 ¹⁷⁵Acts 14:23; Phil 1:1; Tit 1:5; Heb 13:2

2 ¹⁷⁶Acts 16:

3 ¹⁷⁷Acts 15:22 (elders of local congregation make decision), 20:28; 1 Cor 14:4

4 ¹⁷⁸1 Tim 3:6, 5:22; Jam 3:

5 ¹⁷⁹1 Tim 3:2, 7, 10; Tit 1:6-

6 ¹⁸⁰John 3:10; 1 Tim 3:1-11; Tit 1:5-

7 ¹⁸¹Deut 1:13; Acts 7:3; 1 Cor 14:4

CHAPTER 12

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1. Church officers are not only to be chosen by the church, but also to be ordained by imposition of hands and prayer as a solemn act of the church.¹⁸²

SECTION 2. The outward calling of an ordinary officer in the church is established by the approbation of the church, his acceptance of the call and the ceremony of ordination with imposition of hands in a worship service.¹⁸³

SECTION 3. In the church where there is an insufficient number of elders, ordination may be performed by officers assigned by the regional presbytery. Such officers may be from any presbytery in the CRPC.¹⁸⁴ Missionaries may ordain ruling elders and deacons per Chapter 7, Section 3 of this Directory of Church Order.¹⁸⁵

SECTION 4. He who is clearly released from his office in one church unto office in another, cannot be recognized as an officer in both churches.¹⁸⁶ No man may hold two or more offices at the same time in the church or churches. However, where it seems necessary for a pastor or elder to hold offices in more than one church as in cases of several churches utilizing the services of one pastor or in the case of an elder from one church serving also on the session of another church at their request, one church alone shall be a sending church and shall alone have jurisdiction over an officer whose services are so divided. Such arrangements must be done both with the consent of the congregational presbyteries involved as well as the regional presbytery and one church shall be selected as the sending church of such an officer in such cases.

SECTION 5. Installation is the act by which a man who has been ordained is placed in position to do such a work. When a man receives his first call to perform a service, his ordination and installation shall be at the same time. Ordination to any office is for life but a church may determine whether a sabbatical is to be allowed.¹⁸⁷

SECTION 6. The installation of the deacons and ruling elders shall be performed by the congregational presbytery of the church into which they have been called.¹⁸⁸

SECTION 7. When an officer, by reason of advanced age, retires or is retired by his congregational presbytery from his position and is no longer performing in his officially recognized capacity, then the body who called him may entitle him "emeritus" in recognition of his meritorious conduct with the title of his previous office.¹⁸⁹ If he no longer operates in a valid calling he may not vote in any presbytery.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² 1 Tim. 4:14; Acts 1:24.

¹⁸³ Deu. 1:13-17; Acts 6:2-6; 1 Tim. 4:6-16.

¹⁸⁴ 1 Tim. 4:14.

¹⁸⁵ Tit. 1:3-5; Acts 14:23.

¹⁸⁶ 1 Cor. 14:40. Note: No record is given of any person holding two ordinary offices in the church of Christ.

¹⁸⁷ Tit. 1:3-9.

¹⁸⁸ 1 Cor. 14:40; Acts 6:2-6.

¹⁸⁹ Lev. 19:32; Pr. 16:31.

¹⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 14:40.

1 **CHAPTER 13**
2 **THE MEMBERSHIP AND CONGREGATIONAL PRESBYTERY OF THE**
3 **CONGREGATION**

4 SECTION 1. The government of the church is a mixed government. It is a monarchy in respect of
5 Christ, the Head and King of the church.¹⁹¹ In respect of the body, or brotherhood of the church, the
6 power given to the church with its order and structure models a constitutional republic.¹⁹²

7 SECTION 2. The sovereign power which is peculiar unto Christ is exercised:

- 8 1) In calling the church out of the world unto holy fellowship with Himself. Thus, if any church,
9 duly constituted with the marks of a church, apply to presbytery for inclusion therein, though it be
10 independent, it may not be challenged for authenticity as a church due to its independent origin,
11 or status (lack of previous presbyterian oversight).¹⁹³
- 12 2) In instituting the ordinances of His worship, and appointing His ministers and officers for the
13 dispensing of them.¹⁹⁴
- 14 3) In giving Laws for the ordering of all our ways and ways of His House and Kingdom.¹⁹⁵
- 15 4) In giving life and power to all of His institutions and to His people by them.¹⁹⁶
- 16 5) In protecting and delivering His church against and from all the enemies of their peace.¹⁹⁷

17 SECTION 3. The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood, is a prerogative
18 or privilege which the church does exercise:

- 19 1) in choosing their own officers;¹⁹⁸
- 20 2) in admission of their own members;¹⁹⁹
- 21 3) the power to admit any member also gives grant to a power to remove any from their fellowship
22 again.²⁰⁰

23 SECTION 4. It is lawful and expedient that there be fixed congregations, that is, a certain company of
24 Christians to meet in one assembly ordinarily for public worship.²⁰¹ Such company must not be less
25 than three (3) covenant heads²⁰² at least two of whom are ordained as elders.²⁰³

¹⁹¹ Is. 9:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:15-17; Heb. 7:1-3; Rev. 15:3.

¹⁹² Deu. 1:13-17; 1 Tim. 3:1-7. A constitutional republic is a form of government in which covenantal representatives (elders) rule the government, being limited in their rule to the constitutional documents which give order, rights, powers and authority to such offices. This statement in no way is to be used so as to derive, authorize or order church government from any civil form of government. Further, historically, the church has set the standard for rule in that civil governments follow the pattern and standard set by the church in their governance and not the reverse.

¹⁹³ 1 Cor. 1:11-12. Note: There is no place for Chloe's home to appeal except the apostle.

¹⁹⁴ Mat. 26:26-29; 28:19; Rom. 10:15; Eph. 4:10-13.

¹⁹⁵ Ex. 20:1-17; Deu. 5:6-21; Ps.19:7-14; Is. 8:16-18; Rom. 7:22-25; Jam. 1:25; 2:8; 2:9-12.

¹⁹⁶ Mat. 28:18-19.

¹⁹⁷ Ps. 34:7-9.

¹⁹⁸ See previous note.

¹⁹⁹ 2 Cor. 3:1.

²⁰⁰ Mat. 18:17; 2 Cor. 2:6.

²⁰¹ 1 Cor. 1:2.

²⁰² Mat. 18:19-20. Covenant heads refers to the husband (who is a communicant member of the church) in each family unless there is no husband presiding over the family, which cases include the following communicant members: single women, widows, and women without husbands in the congregation.

²⁰³ Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23 with explanation ("Fixed" pertains to its regional representation).

1 SECTION 5. The Holy Spirit always, where it mentions church rule, and church government, ascribes it
2 to elders.²⁰⁴ The work and duty of the people is expressed in the phrase of obeying their elders and
3 submitting themselves unto them in the Lord. It is shown then that an organic or complete church is a
4 body politic, consisting of some who rule and some who are governed in the Lord.²⁰⁵ Every church
5 must have at least one ruling elder, in addition to the pastor, in order to constitute its own
6 congregational presbytery.

7 SECTION 6. The authority which Christ has committed to the congregational presbytery is to
8 shepherd²⁰⁶ the church of God, and accordingly, to call the church together upon any weighty
9 occasion. When the members are so called:

- 10 1) they may not refuse to come without just cause,²⁰⁷
- 11 2) nor, when they are come, to depart before they are dismissed,²⁰⁸
- 12 3) nor speak in the church without permission of the elders,²⁰⁹
- 13 4) nor continue so doing when they require silence,²¹⁰
- 14 5) nor may they oppose neither contradict the judgment or sentence of the elders without sufficient
15 and weighty cause. Such disorders tend to the confusion of the church and are subject to reproof
16 or censure if continued.

17 SECTION 7. It also belongs to the congregational presbytery to:

- 18 1) rule the church with its court;²¹¹
- 19 2) examine any officers²¹²
- 20 3) examine individuals who wish to become members;²¹³
- 21 4) examine catechumens for public profession of faith;²¹⁴
- 22 5) receive accusations brought lawfully before the church and investigate said charges;²¹⁵
- 23 6) refuse such as are disorderly, excommunicate or receive them again;²¹⁶
- 24 7) prepare any matters which shall be brought before the church;²¹⁷
- 25 8) call congregational meetings and stated services, setting the times, place and reasons of
26 assembling;²¹⁸

²⁰⁴ 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 11:2, 13:17, 24.

²⁰⁵ Heb. 13:17.

²⁰⁶ 1 Pet. 5: 1-4. Shepherd here draws reference to both feeding with the Word and proper discipline and oversight of the flock committed to the trust of the session of the church. The minister of the Word is primarily the officer charged with the preaching of the Word and the ruling elders are primarily charged with the rule of the church.

²⁰⁷ Num. 10:7; Heb. 10:25.

²⁰⁸ Acts 15:30.

²⁰⁹ 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

²¹⁰ Num. 12:2; Job 29:21; 1 Cor. 14:19, 29-34.

²¹¹ Ex. 18:13-26; Mat. 18:17; Heb. 13:24.

²¹² 1 Tim. 3:10; Heb. 13:17, 24.

²¹³ Ex. 20:20.

²¹⁴ (very remote); Heb. 13:24; 1 Tim. 4:16; 5:17 (whole book of 1 Timothy).

²¹⁵ Mat. 18:17; 2 Cor. 12:16-21.

²¹⁶ 2 Thes. 3:11-15; Mat. 16:19; 18:17-18; John 20:23; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-11.

²¹⁷ Mat. 18:17.

²¹⁸ 1 Cor 14:40; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; 10:25; Acts 14:23.

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- 1 9) declare and publish the counsel and will of God concerning all matters pertaining to the rule,
2 ministry, finances, service and worship of the church;²¹⁹
- 3 10) pronounce sentence in judicial matters according to the Directory of Discipline and its own
4 church constitution, creeds and covenants;²²⁰
- 5 11) supervise the deaconate, any board of trustees, and all organizations and ministries belonging to
6 the church;²²¹
- 7 12) have final authority over the use of the church properties and assets;²²²
- 8 13) enter into contracts;²²³
- 9 14) officiate in hedging or closing the communion table in the administration of the sacrament;²²⁴
- 10 15) to send delegates from its membership to broader presbytery meetings;²²⁵
- 11 16) to veto any matter that has not been formerly approved by the congregational presbytery when
12 undertaken by any member or officer of the church in matters representing the church in which
13 they are acting as spokesman for the church;²²⁶
- 14 17) nominate men for office;²²⁷
- 15 18) share in counseling responsibilities when requested by the pastor;²²⁸
- 16 19) to engage in visitation;²²⁹ and 20) exhort.²³⁰

17 SECTION 8. The local church consists of a definite membership organized as a distinct congregation
18 (church).²³¹ The membership of the church is composed of both communicant and non-communicant
19 members.²³² Communicant church members are those who have been baptized, have a credible
20 profession of faith, are enrolled in the church and enjoy all the rights of church membership.²³³ Non-
21 communicant church members are the baptized children of communicant members.²³⁴

22 SECTION 9. The rights of all church members ordinarily include access to pastoral oversight,²³⁵
23 government and oversight of the church,²³⁶ worship,²³⁷ instruction²³⁸ and fellowship in the body.²³⁹

²¹⁹ 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 (since the elders rule over the deacons, then they rule over the financial matters)

²²⁰ Mat. 18:17.

²²¹ 1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:10; Acts 6:1-6; find O.T. deaconal basis.

²²² Heb. 13:17.

²²³ Ex. 19:5-8; Num. 11:16-17.

²²⁴ Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luk. 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 10:15-17; 11:19-27.

²²⁵ Acts 15 (not conclusive, see if more).

²²⁶ Heb. 13:17.

²²⁷ Deu. 1:13-17; Tit. 1:5.

²²⁸ Jam. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 5:2-3.

²²⁹ Jam. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 5:2-3.

²³⁰ 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:17, 22; Acts 14:20-22.

²³¹ Rom. 16:5-20.

²³² Acts 16:14-15.

²³³ 1 Cor. 1:9, 14.

²³⁴ 1 Cor. 7:14.

²³⁵ 1 Pet. 5:1-3.

²³⁶ Mat. 18:15-17.

²³⁷ John 4:22; Phil. 3:3.

²³⁸ 1 Cor. 4:15.

²³⁹ Rom. 12:10.

1 Additionally, the rights of the communicant membership include the use of the Lord's Table, baptism
2 of their children,²⁴⁰ marriage with a believer²⁴¹ and the burial of the dead.

3 SECTION 10. The congregational presbytery shall choose its moderator, secretary, deaconal overseer
4 and treasurer as well as other functions as is necessary for good order.²⁴² In cases where the
5 congregational presbytery is larger than two members, the pastor shall not hold the secretary nor
6 treasurer functions of the congregational presbytery unless, upon his appeal and with the concurrence
7 of the congregation (three-quarter vote of the voting members) such is approved by the congregational
8 presbytery. Congregational presbytery will also choose which elder shall attend the broader presbytery
9 meetings along with the pastor. If the pastor is unable to go to a meeting of the broader presbytery for
10 good and weighty cause, then he shall petition his congregational presbytery that it send in his place an
11 elder of his congregational presbytery, whom he shall designate.²⁴³ Every member of congregational
12 presbytery has an equal vote.

13 SECTION 11. The pastor must be present if a quorum is to be achieved, unless he notifies the
14 congregational presbytery of his inability to be present, for good cause. The congregational presbytery
15 may never conduct business with fewer than two elders present who are entitled to vote.²⁴⁴

16 SECTION 12. The congregational presbytery shall convene at the call of the moderator, or by request of
17 presbytery, or by the request of a quorum of the members of the congregational presbytery or upon its
18 own adjournment.²⁴⁵ A congregational presbytery shall do business if it first has a quorum of its
19 ruling elders. Such a quorum of ruling elders shall consist of: 1) one ruling elder if there are less than
20 three; 2) two ruling elders if there are up to four ruling elders in the church; 3) one half of all ruling
21 elders if there are five or more in the church.

22 SECTION 13. If the church has no pastor, the congregational presbytery, itself, shall choose a minister
23 from the regional presbytery or may request that the presbytery provide a minister who shall meet with
24 the congregational presbytery in its deliberations. Such a man shall have voting authority and, if
25 agreeable to the congregational presbytery, shall be the moderator of its meetings.²⁴⁶

26 SECTION 14. The congregational presbytery shall keep the following records solely for its own
27 ecclesiastical use:²⁴⁷ 1) the rolls of the members of the church, both communicant and their non-
28 communicant children, and voting members 2) a record of births, baptisms, deaths, censures,
29 restorations and removals, 3) the minutes of the congregational meetings.

30 SECTION 15. The names of members shall be placed upon or removed from the rolls of the church by
31 order of congregational presbytery, according to the Directory of Discipline. If a member requests to
32 be transferred to another CRPC congregation, the secretary of the congregational presbytery (or clerk)
33 shall send a letter of transfer, commending him and his family to their care. The secretary of the
34 congregational presbytery of the receiving church shall notify the sending church of the date of his

²⁴⁰ 1 Cor. 7:14.

²⁴¹ Neh. 13; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-25; 1 Tim. 2:15, 4:3.

²⁴² 1 Cor. 14:40.

²⁴³ Acts 15:1-2.

²⁴⁴ Mat. 18:19-20. A quorum shall consist of the pastor and the number of ruling elders specified in Section 11. If the pastor cannot be present for good cause and the meeting cannot be rescheduled for some pressing necessity then the quorum shall consist of the ruling elders as specified in Section 11.

²⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 14:40.

²⁴⁶ 1 Cor. 14:40.

²⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 14:40; cf. 1 Cor. 7:14; 15:29; (reference here is to ceremonial washing in the old covenant concerning the death of a covenant member for which account had to be made); 2 Cor. 2:7.

1 reception, upon which notification the secretary of the sending church shall remove his name from the
2 roll of the sending church.²⁴⁸

3 SECTION 16. If a member desires removal to a church outside of the CRPC and the congregational
4 presbytery cannot dissuade him from taking such action, then the congregational presbytery shall grant
5 him a letter of standing which shall designate his good standing in the congregation or shall send a
6 letter of standing with complaint to the receiving church. If the congregational presbytery believes
7 corrective action must be taken, then it shall bring disciplinary action against him. Once it has
8 discerned that the individual has departed in the manner described, the congregational presbytery may
9 discipline or remove the individual from the roll of the church.²⁴⁹

10 SECTION 17. Just reasons for a member's removal of himself from the church are:

- 11 1) if a person cannot continue without partaking in sin—heresy or apostasy;²⁵⁰
- 12 2) in case of personal persecution.²⁵¹ In case of general persecution, then the church as a whole
13 risks being scattered.²⁵²
- 14 3) In case of a real, and not only pretended, lack of competent subsistence, a door being opened for a
15 better supply in another place, together with the means of spiritual edification.²⁵³ In these, and
16 like cases, a member may lawfully remove himself and the church cannot lawfully detain him.

17 SECTION 18. It is unlawful and sinful to withdraw from public membership for these reasons:

- 18 1) To separate out of contempt for the church's fellowship.²⁵⁴
- 19 2) Out of covetousness.²⁵⁵
- 20 3) A mere seeking of personal advancement without spiritual nourishment.²⁵⁶
- 21 4) Out of schism.²⁵⁷
- 22 5) Out of a lack of love.²⁵⁸
- 23 6) Out of a spirit of contention in respect of some unkindness or some evil only conceived which
24 might and should be tolerated in the church and addressed and healed with a spirit of
25 meekness.²⁵⁹
- 26 7) Out of evil, though not easily discerned, of which the church is not yet convinced nor
27 admonished.²⁶⁰

28 SECTION 19. If a member is called to remove only for a time and wishes to go to a church where they
29 are temporarily located (within the CRPC), then letters of recommendation shall be sent by the

²⁴⁸ 2 Cor. 3:1.

²⁴⁹ 1 Cor. 14:40; 2 Cor. 3:1.

²⁵⁰ 2 Cor. 6:17; 2 Pet. 2.

²⁵¹ Acts 20-22.

²⁵² Acts 8:3-4.

²⁵³ 1 Tim. 5:8.

²⁵⁴ Heb. 10:25.

²⁵⁵ 1 Cor. 1:12.

²⁵⁶ 1Jo 2:19.

²⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 12:24-25; 1Jo 2:19.

²⁵⁸ Gal. 5:13-6:1.

²⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 12:24-26.

²⁶⁰ 1 Cor. 11:18-19.

1 member's sending church requesting such oversight. Such an individual shall participate in all rights
2 as a member, except voting in congregational meetings.²⁶¹

3 SECTION 20. If a congregational presbytery becomes so small (less than two elders) or does no longer
4 exist, the regional presbytery shall provide for elections and ordination of officers as are needed from
5 within the congregation. In lieu of this and if the congregation agrees, then presbytery may appoint
6 ruling elders and/or ministers from the regional presbytery (unless the presbytery decides otherwise),
7 to act as a temporary congregational presbytery in order to strengthen the existing congregational
8 presbytery.²⁶² Minutes of the meetings of such temporary congregational presbytery to be forwarded
9 to members of the regional presbytery from which such appointments were made as well as the
10 congregational presbyteries from which temporary congregational presbytery appointments were
11 made. Decisions of the temporary congregational presbytery are subject to review and revision by the
12 appointing regional presbytery. Temporary congregational presbytery appointees from other churches
13 are not eligible for election as office-bearers of the congregation. Congregations under oversight of a
14 temporary congregational presbytery which do not practically qualify as a particular congregation (per
15 DCO 25:3) must declare their church to be a mission work and follow the procedures set forth in DCO
16 25 to be again particularized.²⁶³

17 SECTION 21. This power of government in the elders does not prejudice the power of privilege in the
18 brotherhood²⁶⁴ as neither the power of privilege in the brethren does prejudice the power of
19 government in the congregational presbytery. They may agree to act together as we see in the example
20 of the apostles and brethren. However, though government belong to the elders, the power of privilege
21 remains with the brotherhood.²⁶⁵ For example, the power of judgment in matters of personal censure,
22 as in Matthew 18:15, and the power of liberty in matters of liberty, I Corinthians 8. All other liberties
23 and rights given in Scripture are reserved to the people of the congregation.²⁶⁶

24 SECTION 22. A pastor may not leave his congregation to assume another pastoral charge within
25 presbytery without the advice and consent of his congregational and regional presbytery. If his
26 congregational presbytery does not approve he may then make his appeal to presbytery, as may his
27 congregational presbytery. A pastor may not leave his congregation to assume another pastoral charge
28 outside his regional presbytery without his credentials being passed by his presbytery to the outside
29 body.

30 SECTION 23. A previously unaffiliated church cannot become subject to any presbytery but by
31 approbation of the congregation.²⁶⁷

32

²⁶¹ Rom. 16:1-2.

²⁶² Tit. 1:1-5.

²⁶³ This section updated at 6-2007 American Presbytery. See minutes for grounds and details.

²⁶⁴ Brotherhood refers to the brethren of the particular congregation. They have the same privileges as the royal priesthood of Chapter 1, Section 3.

²⁶⁵ See Chapter 1, Section 3.

²⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 8:9, 10:29.

²⁶⁷ Deu. 1:13-17; Gal. 2:1-13.

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CHAPTER 14
REMUNERATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The apostle concludes that necessary and sufficient remuneration is due unto the pastor. Moreover, the Scripture does not only call elders laborers and workmen but also speaking of them does say, that the laborer is worthy of his hire.²⁶⁸ If the church has financial strength, then it may remunerate the ruling elders, after it has secured the subsistence for the minister.

SECTION 2. The congregational presbytery shall determine the amounts and kinds of remuneration which shall be supplied to the officers of the church.²⁶⁹

SECTION 3. As the Levites of old who had properties given to them of their ownership, it is at least necessary that the church strive to provide housing for the pastor and his family. If there is strength, then the church may provide a home for the pastor to own.²⁷⁰

SECTION 4. Scripture requires this remuneration as a bound duty and due debt and not as a matter of alms nor of free gift.²⁷¹ It is the duty of the church members to tithe to their own church.²⁷²

²⁶⁸ 1 Tim. 5:17-18.
²⁶⁹ 1 Tim. 5:18.
²⁷⁰ Lev. 25:32.
²⁷¹ 1 Cor. 9:4-14.
²⁷² Heb. 7:5.

1 **CHAPTER 15**

2 **ADMISSION OF CHURCH MEMBERS**

3 SECTION 1. Membership in the churches of Christ upon earth does not by God's appointment stand so
4 wide open that all sorts of people good or bad may freely enter therein at their pleasure. Persons who
5 are solicitous of church membership must first regularly attend the duly constituted services of the
6 church (especially the Lord's Day services), attend membership classes with permission of
7 congregational presbytery for instruction in the standards of the church and then be examined by the
8 congregational presbytery as to character and faith, including transfer of membership from another
9 church outside presbytery. The officers are thus charged with "keeping the doors of the church" by
10 such examination of character, profession of faith and regularity of attendance.²⁷³ Such people as are
11 scandalous in conduct and upon credible testimony of evidence or witnesses are perceived as a danger
12 to the flock may be confronted and exhorted not to further attend so as not to disturb the peace of the
13 church.²⁷⁴

14 SECTION 2. The things which are requisite to be found in all communicant church members are:

- 15 1) repentance from sin (as defined by God's Law and according to the Westminster Confession and
16 Catechisms)²⁷⁵,
- 17 2) faith in Jesus Christ (according to Scripture and the Westminster Confession and Catechisms)²⁷⁶,
- 18 3) belief in the inerrancy and content of Scripture (according to Scripture and the Westminster
19 Confession and Catechisms),²⁷⁷
- 20 4) acceptance of the covenantal authority and discipline of the church (according to Scripture, the
21 particular church constitution of each church, and the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as
22 well as the Book of Church Government),²⁷⁸
- 23 5) acceptance of the Covenant of the church (if there is one) which they will sign. Each
24 congregation is encouraged to write a covenant²⁷⁹ in order to obviate any objection which would
25 claim ignorance of good order in the church.²⁸⁰

26 SECTION 3. The weakest measure of faith is to be accepted in those that desire to be admitted into the
27 church. Weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that faith, repentance and holiness which is
28 required in church members and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and
29 growth in the faith.²⁸¹

²⁷³ See previous footnotes concerning each of these points.

²⁷⁴ Prov. 26:20-26.

²⁷⁵ Rom. 1:17-32; 2:15; 3:28-29; WCF 6:6; WLC 24.

²⁷⁶ Eph 2:8; WCF 16; WLC 72, 73, 153.

²⁷⁷ Ps. 119; Mat. 5:18-19; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; WCF 1.

²⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 14:40.

²⁷⁹ See Appendix A for a copy of the Covenant of Church Membership.

²⁸⁰ Often new members will later claim that the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith involve complexities which they did not understand at the time of membership. Regrettably, this is used as an excuse to claim ignorance of basic tenets of covenanting unto good order so as to avoid schism and maintain the integrity of the church and their own character. The covenant as listed in Appendix A strives to impress upon a new member such basic obligations and exposure of common deceits without developing into doctrinal complexities.

²⁸¹ Rom. 14:1.

1 SECTION 4. Children of adult members enter solely upon admission of at least one parent being under a
2 holy covenant. Such children, if not previously baptized in the faith, must be brought forward for holy
3 baptism in order to be accounted members of the church covenant.²⁸²

4 SECTION 5. In case any through excessive fear or other infirmity be unable to make their personal
5 testimony of their faith in Christ in public, it is sufficient that the elders, having received private
6 satisfaction, give an account of their satisfaction in the case to the church in public.²⁸³

7 SECTION 6. A new member shall be received and have his name placed on the roll of the church only
8 by order of the congregational presbytery. The circumstances involving reception of any new member
9 are the following:

- 10 1) by letter of transfer within the CRPC;²⁸⁴
- 11 2) by letter of transfer from another church of like faith and practice outside the CRPC;²⁸⁵
- 12 3) by an affirmation of faith;²⁸⁶
- 13 4) by a confession of faith;²⁸⁷
- 14 5) by being a noncommunicant baptized member;²⁸⁸ or
- 15 6) by being a noncommunicant unbaptized child of a member (who will be subject to baptism).²⁸⁹

16 SECTION 7. A member may be received by a letter of transfer from another church in the CRPC.²⁹⁰
17 The congregational presbytery shall acquire jurisdiction after they have voted to receive him into
18 membership and the congregation apprised by public announcement. All the rights and privileges of
19 membership then belong to this covenant member. No rights or privileges shall be qualified, until any
20 pending appellate process has been exhausted by the broadest CRPC court to which a complaint can be
21 made except in the circumstance described in DCD 13:2.²⁹¹

22 SECTION 8. A member may be received by a letter of transfer or its equivalent from another church of
23 like faith and practice which has been approved by the congregational presbytery or regional
24 presbytery. Prior to being received into membership by letter of transfer, the congregation must be
25 apprised by public announcement to the church.²⁹² The congregational presbytery may examine the
26 candidate for membership to ascertain if he possesses the knowledge requisite for an active faith and
27 obedient walk in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the merits of Christ alone,²⁹³ confesses
28 an hearty trust in Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, places his hope of everlasting righteousness and
29 salvation in God's grace,²⁹⁴ and is resolved to live a Christian life by the grace of God.²⁹⁵ The
30 congregational presbytery shall acquire jurisdiction after they have voted to receive him into
31 membership. All the rights and privileges of membership then belong to this covenant member. Such

²⁸² Gen. 17:11-12; Ps. 127:3-5; Mat. 18:1-5; 19:13-14; 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 7:14.

²⁸³ Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 14:40; Gal. 6:2.

²⁸⁴ Rom. 16:1-16.

²⁸⁵ 2 Cor. 3:1.

²⁸⁶ Acts 2:46-47.

²⁸⁷ Acts 8:37-38.

²⁸⁸ 1 Cor. 7:14.

²⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 7:14.

²⁹⁰ Rom. 16:1.

²⁹¹ Phm 1-2, 12-20.

²⁹² Phm 1, 12.

²⁹³ HC 1.

²⁹⁴ HC 20, 21, 60.

²⁹⁵ 1Pe 1:14-15.

1 rights and privileges shall not be qualified by the filing of any complaint, until the complaint is
2 sustained by the broadest CRPC court to which a complaint can be made.²⁹⁶

3 SECTION 9. A member may be received by an affirmation of faith. An affirmation is made by an
4 individual who has previously confessed his faith and united with a church other than a church of like
5 faith and practice and now desires to become a member of a church of the CRPC.²⁹⁷ The
6 congregational presbytery shall examine the candidate for membership to ascertain if he possesses the
7 knowledge requisite for an active faith and obedient walk in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation
8 on the merits of Christ alone,²⁹⁸ confesses an hearty trust in Christ for the forgiveness of his sins,
9 places his hope of everlasting righteousness and salvation in God's grace,²⁹⁹ and is resolved to live a
10 Christian life by the grace of God. The congregational presbytery shall acquire jurisdiction after they
11 have voted to receive him into membership and he has made a public profession of faith before the
12 congregation. All the rights and privileges of membership then belong to this covenant member. Such
13 rights and privileges shall not be qualified by the filing of any complaint, until the complaint is
14 sustained by the broadest CRPC court to which a complaint can be made.³⁰⁰

15 SECTION 10. A member may be received by a confession of faith. A confession of faith is made by one
16 who has not previously been a communicant member of a church, and now desires to become a
17 communicant member of a church of the CRPC.³⁰¹ The congregational presbytery shall examine the
18 candidate for membership to ascertain if he possesses the knowledge requisite for an active faith and
19 obedient walk in the Lord Jesus Christ, relies for salvation on the merits of Christ alone,³⁰² confesses
20 an hearty trust in Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, places his hope of everlasting righteousness and
21 salvation in God's grace,³⁰³ and is resolved to live a Christian life by the grace of God. The
22 congregational presbytery shall acquire jurisdiction after they have voted to receive him into
23 membership and he has made a public profession of faith before the congregation. All the rights and
24 privileges of membership then belong to this covenant member. Such rights and privileges shall not be
25 qualified by the filing of any complaint, until the complaint is sustained by the broadest CRPC court to
26 which a complaint can be made.³⁰⁴

27 SECTION 11. Noncommunicant unbaptized children whose parent(s) or guardian(s) is/are members of
28 the church shall be received by baptism.³⁰⁵

29 SECTION 12. Noncommunicant baptized members may be received with their parent(s) or
30 guardian(s).³⁰⁶

31

²⁹⁶ Phm 1-2, 12-20.

²⁹⁷ Acts 2:46-47.

²⁹⁸ HC 1.

²⁹⁹ HC 20, 21, 60.

³⁰⁰ Phm 1-2, 12-20.

³⁰¹ Acts 8:37-38.

³⁰² HC 1.

³⁰³ HC 20, 21, 60.

³⁰⁴ Phm 1-2, 12-20.

³⁰⁵ Acts 16:31-33.

³⁰⁶ 1 Cor.7:14.

1 **CHAPTER 16**
2 **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES**

3 SECTION 1. The fellowship of the churches is exercised in many ways.

- 4 1) By way of mutual care in taking thought for the welfare, necessity and safety of each other.³⁰⁷
5 2) By way of consultation one with another when there is need or occasion, as determined by
6 presbytery or congregational presbytery.³⁰⁸
7 3) A letter of admonition or counsel may be sent by the presbytery to a church if so requested by
8 another church in presbytery when there is concern over schism, scandal or other troubled
9 concerns and, must be read to the congregation in special congregational meeting assembled for
10 such reason within 2 months or the regularly scheduled congregational meeting (within 2 months)
11 unless the congregational presbytery refuse and appeal to synodical presbytery at its next meeting.
12 If there be time constraints involved, then presbytery must so indicate when it sends such a letter
13 and, if needed, synodical presbytery will send a special court to hear the appeal and parties to the
14 issue.³⁰⁹
15 4) Fellowship activities among the members of the churches can be arranged through the
16 congregational presbyteries involved and should be encouraged where possible.³¹⁰
17 5) Ministerial helps can be offered as has already been stated, including the use and loan of officers
18 of other churches.³¹¹
19 6) Ministry can be coordinated through the churches themselves in conjunction with other churches,
20 especially in matters pertaining to charity work.³¹²
21 7) Administration of the sacraments, funerals, ordinations, courts, marriages and other ministerial
22 helps can be provided by other churches in presbytery, if requested by the congregational
23 presbytery in need or as otherwise specified in this Book of Church Government.³¹³
24

³⁰⁷ 2 Cor. 8.

³⁰⁸ Acts 15.

³⁰⁹ Acts 15.

³¹⁰ Rom. 16:1-2.

³¹¹ 1 Thes. 3:1-10.

³¹² Acts 15:1-4; 2 Cor. 8;

³¹³ Acts 4:32-37; 2 Tim. 4:9-22.

CHAPTER 17
ECCLESIASTICAL MEETINGS

1
2
3 SECTION 1. The congregational presbytery may choose times and places convenient for its meetings.

4 SECTION 2. Congregational presbytery must provide orderly means by which members may address the
5 congregational presbytery.³¹⁴

6 SECTION 3. A reasonable attempt must be made by the Moderator to notify each elder of the time and
7 place of such meetings or of any change in the scheduling of such a meeting. Such changes can only
8 be made by the Moderator of the congregational presbytery.³¹⁵

9 SECTION 4. All matters to be brought before the congregation are brought solely by the congregational
10 presbytery who alone can call a congregational meeting. The date, time, and location of all
11 congregational meetings must be announced either orally or by insertion in the church bulletin at the
12 worship services of at least two (2) Lord's Days prior to the time set for the meeting, or by circular
13 letter to all voting members at the last address they have provided to the church, mailed at least ten
14 (10) days prior to the meeting.³¹⁶

15 SECTION 5. If business cannot be concluded or if the congregational presbytery so desire, another
16 meeting can be arranged for any time subsequent to the one announced. The congregational presbytery
17 may put the congregation upon notice at any congregational meeting of its intent to call for another
18 meeting at any time subsequent (up to 6 months in duration) without specifying the time and place
19 until at least 1 week ahead, except in meetings where a vote will be taken. In such cases, the
20 congregational presbytery must announce ahead 2 weeks (which announcement can be made in
21 congregational meeting).

22 SECTION 6. A quorum of one half of the voting members of the congregation is needed to convene a
23 meeting.³¹⁷ Voting is by voting members of the congregation as defined by the local church
24 constitution and by-laws. It is understood that any limitation on the exercise of the franchise by one or
25 more members of a family must be according to an objective basis; examples of such objective criteria
26 would include (but are not limited to) the following: voting by heads of household only; voting by
27 male heads of household only; voting only by those who can subscribe to a particular statement of
28 faith; voting only by those who tithe their income to the local church; voting only by those who have
29 been communicant members for a certain period of time. If voting is limited to those who have been
30 communicant members for a certain period of time, that period of time cannot exceed one year. Any
31 communicant member who believes that the rules regarding the franchise are being enacted or applied
32 in an arbitrary way has the right to complain with respect to the matter; and a broader court has the
33 authority to overturn any rules or application of the rules with regard to congregational franchise
34 which may be found to be arbitrary.

35 SECTION 7. The act of a majority present at an ecclesiastical meeting at which a quorum is present,
36 when the vote is taken, shall be the act of the body meeting unless a specific amount of majority, e.g.
37 2/3 or 3/4, is otherwise required by the DCO, in which case, that specific majority being achieved shall
38 be the act of the body meeting.

³¹⁴ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³¹⁵ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³¹⁶ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³¹⁷ See previous footnotes concerning these issues. Chapter 13, Sections 10-11.

1 SECTION 8. Any issue which the congregational presbytery brings to the congregation for vote will be
2 determined by majority vote except as otherwise specified below.

3 SECTION 9. Issues which require the formal presentation and approval of the congregation in its
4 meeting are:³¹⁸

- 5 1) The calling of officers — three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation assembled by voting
6 members, voted upon in written secret ballot, for approval.
 - 7 2) Changes in the standards of the church,— not including the Standards of the CRPC,—three-
8 fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation assembled by voting members, voted upon in written secret
9 ballot, for approval.
 - 10 3) Buying and selling of church properties shall be done according to the local church constitution
11 and by-laws.
 - 12 4) Legal matters pertaining to the civil magistrate X three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation
13 assembled by voting members, voted upon in written secret ballot, for approval.
 - 14 5) Withdrawal from presbytery — three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation assembled by voting
15 members, voted upon in written secret ballot, for approval. This vote will take place only after 90
16 days notice has been given to the communications clerk of the presbytery and the presbytery has
17 been given opportunity to send representative(s) to meet with the congregation in its
18 congregational meeting.
 - 19 6) Dissolution of a particular congregation — three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation assembled
20 by voting members, voted upon in written secret ballot, for approval. This vote will take place
21 only after 90 days notice has been given to the communications secretary of the regional
22 presbytery and the presbytery has been given opportunity to meet and send representative(s) to
23 meet with the congregation in its congregational meeting as set forth by the regional presbytery
24 which, alone, has the right to dissolve a CRPC congregation (DCO 18:11, 2).
- 25 SECTION 10. For the purpose of keeping order, the Moderator of congregational presbytery has the
26 authority to limit length of discussion to avoid filibuster or disorderly conduct. Only voting members
27 may speak in congregational meetings.³¹⁹ Covenant heads³²⁰ of families are encouraged to hear, to
28 weigh and to represent non-covenant heads so as not to divide households.
- 29

³¹⁸ The following issues pertain to the rights and privileges of the brotherhood of a particular congregation.

³¹⁹ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³²⁰ Covenant heads refers to the husband (who is a communicant member of the church) in each family unless there is no husband presiding over the family, which cases include the following communicant members: single women, widows, and women without husbands in the congregation.

1 **CHAPTER 18**
2 **THE BROADER PRESBYTERIES**³²¹

3 SECTION 1. The regional presbytery is the governing body of the regional church.

4 SECTION 2. A regional church consists of all the members of the member congregations which sends
5 representatives to its regional presbytery.

6 SECTION 3. The broader presbyteries shall be composed of two elders from each church, normally one
7 ruling elder and one minister of the word. Each church is entitled to two votes, so exercised by the two
8 delegates sent. Privilege of the floor shall be exercised only by the delegates so empowered by the
9 churches unless otherwise permitted by the broader assembly. If a church has not the ability to comply
10 to the above, then it shall render an account thereof to the broader assembly. Each church shall
11 provide credentials for its delegates and alternate delegates. No proxy voting will be allowed. A
12 quorum shall consist of the assembling of at least one-half (½) of the member churches of the broader
13 presbytery irrespective of the number of delegates sent.

14 SECTION 4. Presbytery has the power to grant the privilege of the floor to whomever it may deem
15 appropriate.

16 SECTION 5. Each regional presbytery meeting will be opened by an officer of the convening church³²²
17 responsible for that presbytery meeting. The docket order will ordinarily be as follows:

18 *(Convening church brings the docket and runs the meeting until the election of a moderator. The*
19 *convening church secretary records the meeting until a secretary is elected.)*

20 Call to Order

21 Opening in Prayer

22 Devotion

23 Singing of a Psalm or hymn,³²³

24 Submission of credentials.³²⁴

25 Roll Call of members, guests and observers.

26 Declaration of Quorum.³²⁵

27 Election of Moderator, Secretary and Preparer of the Short Report from voting members present at the
28 meeting.

29 *(New Moderator takes over)*

30 Reading aloud of the "Introductory Principles of the CRPC".³²⁶

³²¹ See previous footnotes concerning presbytery and its officers.

³²² The host and convening churches shall be the same church, if possible, as long as the location of the Presbytery is rotated.

³²³ Changed "song" for "hymn" 11-2008 Presbytery. See minutes XV, D, (3).

³²⁴ Switched order of "submission of credentials" and "Roll call of member..." 11-2008 Presbytery. See minutes XV, D, (2).

³²⁵ Order changed to comply with practice 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. H. for grounds and details.

- 1 Should privilege of the floor be given to guests?
- 2 Docket presentation, orders of the day and adoption³²⁷
- 3 Reports from the Churches, Ministers and Mission Works
- 4 Review and Approval of Former Minutes
- 5 Business from previous minutes.³²⁸
- 6 Communications
- 7 Overtures
- 8 Additional Business (as allowed by the DCO)
- 9 Website changes approved in light of business at this meeting.
- 10 Determining next date and convening church responsible for the next meeting.
- 11 Issuing and signing of any needed certificates or credentials.³²⁹
- 12 Reading and approval of the short report.
- 13 Approve the concept minutes at the end of each day and end of total meeting. (Provide written minutes
- 14 in electronic and paper form at the end of each meeting.)
- 15 Adjournment & Prayer
- 16 *The Moderator will conduct his duties until the meeting is adjourned and then his function shall cease.*
- 17 SECTION 6. The regional presbytery shall choose a secretary for its meetings who may be an officer of
- 18 any church.
- 19 SECTION 7. Committees shall choose such an individual and any other officers needed, unless regional
- 20 presbytery shall choose. Time and place will be determined by the same means.
- 21 SECTION 8. A communications clerk will be elected for the regional presbytery for an indefinite period
- 22 of time as determined by the presbytery for the purpose of receiving and forwarding all
- 23 communications by post, by phone, or e-mail to the convening church responsible for the next
- 24 presbytery meeting.
- 25 SECTION 9. All matters to be submitted to regional presbytery for its next meeting must be presented
- 26 by a congregational presbytery or by a minister of the Word. Such matters, when so presented, must
- 27 be sent to the communications secretary in order to be forwarded by him to the convening church³³⁰.
- 28 When the minister of the Word alone intends to bring an issue before the regional presbytery, he must
- 29 inform the congregational presbytery under whose authority he works of his intention and the content

³²⁶ Reading of the Introductory Principles at each meeting established 11-2008 Presbytery. See Minutes XV, E.

³²⁷ Eliminated “deliberation of the docket” previously following this item at 11-2008 Presbytery. See minutes XV, D, (1).

³²⁸ This subsection addition was made at 11-2014 American Presbytery. See minutes for details.

³²⁹ This paragraph was added at the 11-2012 Presbytery. See Minutes 14 B for details and grounds.

³³⁰ It is obvious that any issues to be submitted by the session of the convening church itself need not be sent to the communications secretary but must be forwarded to the other churches and ministries as any other matter.

1 of the matter to be submitted and so indicate in his overture. If the congregational presbytery differs
2 with him concerning the matter, he must attach a statement concerning the matter in question at the
3 time he forwards his request. Additionally, the difference must be stated in a separate report prepared
4 and forwarded by the secretary of the congregational presbytery. These documents will be forwarded
5 to the regional presbytery so that it may hear the matter.

6 SECTION 10. All judicial matters will be handled according to the Directory of Discipline. In all non-
7 judicial matters, the convening church must, at least 35 days prior to the convening of the regional
8 presbytery, provide a docket and list of overtures to all congregational presbyteries in the regional
9 presbytery. Anyone presenting an overture to the presbytery must send it to the communications
10 secretary and the convening church at least 45 days prior to the convening of the regional presbytery,
11 unless necessity prevents such 45 day notice, of which necessity presbytery must be informed.
12 Regional presbytery judges that necessity truly existed³³¹ by hearing the matter and voicing its
13 agreement by a three-quarters (3/4) vote majority of all delegates. It will then go on to deliberate the
14 matter as it would any other matter by affirming, amending, denying or refusing to hear the matter any
15 further. Regional presbytery may also send the matter back to the ministry, church or churches where
16 it originated with instructions as to further handling of the matter. Regional presbytery may also
17 assign the matter to a ministry, church or churches for further action with instructions to that effect.

18 SECTION 11. The regional presbytery has the power to offer whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare
19 of the churches under its authority. While always respecting the rights and liberties guaranteed to the
20 individual congregations, the regional presbytery has the power:

- 21 1) to receive congregations;
- 22 2) to unite and dissolve congregations at the request of the people and congregational presbyteries
23 involved;
- 24 3) to visit congregations as specified;
- 25 4) to receive and issue all appeals according to the Book of Church Government;
- 26 5) to resolve all questions of doctrine or discipline;
- 27 6) to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity and peace of the church;
- 28 7) to examine, license, ordain and authorize the training of all pastoral candidates;
- 29 8) to install and ordain, judge and remove pastors according to the Directory of Discipline;
- 30 9) to offer its united counsels to its member churches; and
- 31 10) if a member of the CRPC without a local CRPC church to attend, or desiring membership in the
32 CRPC, appeals to the regional presbytery for admission, the presbytery will have power to direct
33 such a person to a local CRPC church for admission. However, the congregational presbytery of
34 such a church may refuse admission to its membership but not without cause. Regional
35 presbytery shall not have the power in such cases to impose the membership of an individual upon
36 a local church by any means whatsoever including judicial authority.
- 37 11) to commend. From time to time, a published work (books, video or other published media) may
38 be submitted to the CRPC for its commendation. It is not necessary for any to request such
39 commendation. If requested, the CRPC may grant its commendation to such a published work.
40 However, such commendation will not be binding upon the churches in the CRPC. If a published

³³¹ Necessity here means that bringing the matter to presbytery without two weeks notice was unavoidable for some reason, which reason must be explained to presbytery for its approval before the matter in question may be deliberated by the presbytery.

1 work is not commended or not submitted for commendation, the CRPC herein gives notice that
2 (unless otherwise stated by the CRPC) such shall not be construed disparagingly.

3 12) to recommend a ministry. From time to time, a ministry may be submitted to the CRPC for its
4 recommendation. It is not necessary for any to request such recommendation. If requested, the
5 CRPC may grant its recommendation to such a ministry. However, such recommendation will not
6 be binding upon the churches in the CRPC. If a ministry is not recommended or submitted for
7 recommendation, the CRPC herein gives notice that (unless otherwise stated by the CRPC) such
8 shall not be construed disparagingly.

9 13) The broader presbyteries have the authority to make decisions with respect to areas of the DCO,
10 DCD and DCW which do not cover a particular situation as it would be impossible to include all
11 contingencies therein.³³²

12 SECTION 12. If an emergency shall require a regional presbytery meeting sooner than the next
13 scheduled meeting, the convening church of the next stated meeting³³³ shall, at the request of any two
14 ministers (from two existing particular churches) and two ruling elders (from two existing particular
15 churches), call a special meeting. In the event that insufficient teaching or ruling elders exist in two
16 churches of that regional presbytery, then teaching and/or ruling elders from three churches shall be
17 required. It is strongly advised that informal queries be made of the most convenient dates for such a
18 presbytery to take place prior to the formal calling of the meeting so as to assure maximum attendance
19 and a quorum. "Emergency" shall herein be defined as such extenuating circumstances that cannot
20 reasonably wait until the next regularly scheduled presbytery such as matters pertaining to examination
21 of candidates, concerning adjudication but not for adjudication itself, reports from presbytery
22 committees upon which urgent decisions are needed, and so forth. Unless unavoidable, matters of a
23 grave and serious nature should not be conducted in such meetings. For this purpose correspondence
24 shall be sent, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every minister and clerk of
25 every congregational presbytery that is a member of the regional presbytery, at least ten days prior to
26 the meeting. Nothing shall be transacted at such special meetings except the particular business of the
27 emergency for which it has been convened. The decisions of any emergency meeting of presbytery
28 shall be reviewed and must be ratified at the next regularly scheduled meeting of presbytery in order to
29 continue to bear binding authority.³³⁴

30 SECTION 13. Each day's meeting shall open and close with prayer.³³⁵

31 SECTION 14. All presbyteries beyond that of the congregational presbytery shall be considered in
32 existence only during the time of duly called meetings. There is not authority of the broader
33 presbytery capable of being exercised outside of such meetings except as granted in the mandate given
34 to an individual or committee for a specific purpose as the presbytery's representative.

35 SECTION 15. If the only presbytery above the congregational level is the American presbytery, the
36 normal duties of the regional presbytery will devolve upon the American presbytery. The American
37 presbytery will follow the normal procedures for the conduct of business as found in DCO 18, with the
38 understanding that any of the particular requirements may be suspended at any time, according to
39 established CRPC³³⁶ procedures. Furthermore, any meetings of the American presbytery may be held
40 via telephone conference call, in which one or more members of the presbytery may participate from a
41 distance."

³³² 13) added at 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. Q. for details and grounds.

³³³ "of the stated meeting" added at 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. G. for details and grounds.

³³⁴ Changes in this section made 6-2007 Presbytery. See minutes for details.

³³⁵ 1 Tim. 2:8.

³³⁶ "normal parliamentary" replaced by "established CRPC" 11-2008 Presbytery. See Minutes XV, D, (13).

1 SECTION 16: **Standard American Presbytery meeting days and times** are hereby established on
2 Mondays from 7 p.m. to Wednesdays at 3 p.m. for purposes of scheduling on such dates as are
3 determined by the American Presbytery unless otherwise stated by the convening church at the time
4 when the docket is sent out.³³⁷ Convening churches, hosting churches, delegates and presbyters
5 should plan accordingly. The attendance of presbyters/delegates are required during these times
6 except in case of emergencies, excuse from the assembled presbytery, orders of the day or
7 adjournment.

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³³⁷ Changed to convening church giving estimated time of conclusion at 07-2008 American Presbytery. See minutes.

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CHAPTER 19
CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT PASTORS

SECTION 1. A congregation which has no pastor shall continue to conduct worship and undertake all business under the authority of its congregational presbytery. Regional presbytery may be asked to provide a pastor for the congregation.³³⁸

SECTION 2. Normally, only ministers and licentiates of the CRPC shall be employed in pulpit supply. However, for lack of such supply availability, the congregational presbytery may ask another minister or licentiate to supply, with approval of the regional presbytery.³³⁹

³³⁸ With no minister present the sacraments will not be administered in the congregation.

³³⁹ See previous footnote concerning licentiates.

1 **CHAPTER 20**

2 **RECEPTION OF ORDAINED MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.**

3
4 This chapter contains the process by which previously ordained men shall be examined and received by
5 the regional presbytery.

6 SECTION 1: The request from a local church for an ordained minister from another denomination to be
7 placed as a Minister of the Gospel in their church shall include the following accompanied
8 documentation:

9 1) References and letters of recommendation from whatever reputable source, especially from his
10 former churches and denominations attesting to his character and integrity as a Minister of the
11 Gospel including the time and circumstances under which the person providing the reference.

12 2) Copy of Letter of Call to the Candidate from the calling church (if relevant).

13 3) Copy of Letter to the Church of Acceptance of the Call by the Candidate (if relevant).

14 4) Letters of academic attestation (as many as possible and as relevant).

15 5) The Candidate's answers to the questions of the *Checklist for Church Officers* (Appendix A) and
16 his agreement to abide by the limitations in DCO 31 should any exceptions/scruples be noted.

17 6) The Candidate's completion of the *Questionnaire For Candidates Licensing, Ordination Or*
18 *Reception As Ministers From Other Denominations* (Appendix B) if required in advance by
19 presbytery .

20 SECTION 2: Presbytery (or her appointees) shall determine that the accompanied documentation is in
21 good order and that the Reception Examination may take place. The Reception Examination
22 (sometimes referred to as a *Colloquium Doctrum*) is not as thorough as an examination for
23 ordination, but shall still seek to cover the same basic areas to determine the candidate's
24 qualifications and compatibility within the CRPC. It is strongly advised that such documentation be
25 submitted 45 days in advance to give presbyters opportunity to thoroughly examine them and inquire
26 about anything that might be missing so as to preclude a candidate's arrival without all the proper
27 documentation. It shall be the task of the convening church to verify that what is submitted meets
28 the requirements of this chapter and to notify the calling church of any omissions as soon as
29 possible, for their prompt submission.

30 SECTION 3: The presbytery shall conduct this examination to at least cover the following areas by
31 appointing examiners in each of these areas sufficiently in advance to insure their preparation for the
32 examination process:

33 1) Doctrine and Creeds

34 2) Church History

35 3) Church Polity

36 4) Ethics

37 5) Pastoral Theology & Practice

- 1 6) View & Knowledge of Scripture
2 7) Personal Faith & Life
3 8) Understanding and agreement of covenantal commitment within the CRPC.
4 9) Any other areas of importance to the members of the Presbytery

5 SECTION 4: Presbytery may recess at any time(s) during examination, but at the conclusion shall go
6 into Closed Session to discuss the Examination and determine if the Ministers has sustained the
7 Examination to make him eligible for transfer into the CRPC. There should be a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote in
8 favor of the candidate's performance in items 1) and 8) in Section 3 above, and at least a majority in
9 all the others for his total examination to be sustained.

10 SECTION 5: Upon sustaining the Examination, the Minister shall be informed and prayer of thanks
11 given. If the Candidate has not sustained the examination, he shall be notified if and how he may
12 rectify the areas of concern and shall also be notified that he, through the calling Church, may
13 request a revisiting of the issues of concern.

14 SECTION 6: Plans and details for the reception of the Minister into the CRPC shall be established as
15 is convenient for both the minister and the calling church utilizing the following principles,
16 procedures and vows:

17 1) At the time for installation the home church should request a minister of Presbytery to preach a
18 sermon appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform those
19 assembled concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God and
20 concerning the duties which the minister's service will place upon him, and shall endeavor to give
21 them a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination to the office and installation in his field of
22 service. Then addressing the candidate he shall propose to him the following questions:

23 *a) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only*
24 *infallible rule of faith and practice?*

25 *b) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of Covenant*
26 *Reformed Presbyterian Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy*
27 *Scriptures?*

28 *c) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Covenant Reformed*
29 *Presbyterian Church?*

30 *d) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?*

31 *e) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy*
32 *ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the Gospel of his Son?*

33 *f) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel, and the*
34 *purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise*
35 *unto you on that account?*

36 *g) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties*
37 *which become you as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel, as well as in all the duties of*
38 *your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the Gospel by your life, and walking with*
39 *exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?*

40 *h) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking*

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1 upon you the work of a Minister of the Word of God in this church you are influenced by a
2 sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of His church?

3 i) Are you now willing to undertake the work of a Minister of the Word of God, and do you
4 promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you
5 strength?

6 2) The candidate, having answered these questions in the affirmative shall by prayer be solemnly
7 received into the calling of Minister of the Gospel in this church and reception as a minister of the
8 Gospel in the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church. Prayer being ended, the officiating
9 minister, on behalf of both the local presbytery and the regional presbytery shall declare him to be
10 installed as of a Minister of the Word of God and received into the Covenant Reformed
11 Presbyterian Church. The presbytery shall then extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

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CHAPTER 21
LICENSING CANDIDATES TO EXHORT³⁴⁰

SECTION 1. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed. For this purpose candidates for ordination shall first be licensed by regional presbyteries to exhort (i.e. speak a word of edification) as probationers. (The word “exhort” is used in lieu of “preach” to distinguish the word spoken by this probationer from that of a duly called, lawfully ordained minister of the Word with the full authority of the Lord Jesus Christ through His Church. Such licensure shall not authorize the licentiate to administer the sacraments of the Lord.) After a period of probation sufficient to make trial of their qualifications and service, and having received reports that their services are edifying to the church, the regional presbyteries may in due time proceed to ordain such probationers, or licentiates, to the sacred office.

SECTION 2. A candidate for licensure must be a male, communicant member of a local congregation of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church. Upon request by his congregational presbytery, he will be examined by the regional presbytery in which his church membership resides. The regional presbytery shall receive a written recommendation from the congregational presbytery of which the candidate is a member, certifying that in its judgment his Christian faith and potential gifts qualify him to stand trials for licensure with a view to ordination to the gospel ministry. It is of particular importance, at this time, that the regional presbytery inquire as to the grace of God in him and whether he be of such holiness of life as is requisite in a minister of the gospel. It is therefore the duty of the regional presbytery to examine him respecting his Christian faith, life, service, and the motives influencing him to desire the sacred office. The regional presbytery must show its continuing concern for the progress of all the licentiates under its care, and shall continually guide, counsel, and help them as they further prepare themselves for the work of the ministry. However, the primary care and oversight of the licentiate remains with the congregational presbytery in which his membership resides. Churches are strongly urged to use the *Checklist For Church Officers* found in Appendix A as part of their qualification and examination process for Licentiates, which information should then be made available to the regional presbytery when licensing approval is sought. Every candidate for office shall set forth in writing any exceptions/scruples they have that are not already allowed by Const. I,B, 1 or 2 and be prepared to abide by the provisions of DCO 31.

SECTION 3. It is highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the church to entrust the preaching of the gospel to weak and ignorant men. The presbytery shall therefore ordinarily license a candidate only if he has received a four year bachelor degree or its academic equivalent from a college or university, and has completed an adequate course of theological study equivalent to at least one year and a half. Proofs of academic attestation shall be provided to the presbytery by the local church requesting the licensure of the candidate.

SECTION 4. Except under unusual circumstances beyond the control of the candidate and affirmed by the vote of the presbytery, trials for licensure shall usually not extend beyond one calendar year from the first meeting of the regional presbytery at which any portion of a candidate’s trials for licensure were commenced.

³⁴⁰ The chapter title changed at 07-2009 American Presbytery with subsequent changes made in Sections 1, 6, 9, 10 & 14 and Section 15 added. See Minutes 13, B under DCO 21 changes.

1 SECTION 5. The candidate for licensure shall be examined by the regional presbytery, or by a committee
2 appointed for that purpose, in the English Bible, ecclesiastical history, theology, his ability to exegete
3 the Scriptures, and, ordinarily, the original languages of the Scriptures. The regional presbytery shall
4 also satisfy itself, by receiving testimonials or by other means, of the candidate's piety and exemplary
5 life and his personal zeal for and experience in presenting his faith to others. If the examination of
6 candidates is referred to a committee, an examination at least in theology shall also be held before the
7 regional presbytery; and if one-fourth of the presbyters present at the meeting are dissatisfied with the
8 examination in theology and exegesis of the Scriptures, the candidate will be required to continue the
9 examination at a future meeting of the regional presbytery.

10 SECTION 6. In order to make trial of his gifts to explain and vindicate and practically to enforce the
11 doctrines of the gospel, the presbytery shall further require that the candidate prepare (1) an edifying
12 word, which the presbytery may ask to be delivered in its presence, and (2) an essay on an appointed
13 theological subject and (3) an exegesis of an assigned Old Testament and New Testament passage of
14 Scripture.

15 SECTION 7. No exception shall be made of any of the educational or other requirements for licensure
16 (other than original languages) unless the regional presbytery judges, by a three-fourths vote of the
17 members present, that the exception is warranted by the manifest qualifications of the candidate for the
18 holy office of the gospel ministry. If the regional presbytery finds that the candidate lacks competency
19 in the Hebrew and Greek languages, or one of them, it may judge by a vote of the members present to
20 waive these requirements only when the applicant has given an affirmative answer to the following
21 question:

22 *Do you promise that you will make a continuing endeavor to attain competency in those*
23 *languages until the regional presbytery is satisfied?*

24 SECTION 8. If the regional presbytery is satisfied with the trials of a candidate for licensure, it shall
25 then proceed to license him in the following manner. The moderator shall propose to him the following
26 questions:

- 27 1. *Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only*
28 *infallible rule of faith and practice?*
- 29 2. *Do you honestly and without reservation embrace the doctrinal standards of the Covenant*
30 *Reformed Presbyterian Church with the conviction that the same are a summary of the system of*
31 *truth of Holy Scripture, and do you promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject*
32 *all doctrines conflicting therewith?*
- 33 3. *Do you promise to seek the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church?*
- 34 4. *Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this regional presbytery of*
35 *the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, and any other presbytery under the jurisdiction of*
36 *which you may come?*

37 SECTION 9. After the candidate has answered these questions in the affirmative the moderator shall
38 offer prayer suitable to the occasion and shall address the candidate in the following or similar words:
39 *"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority that he has given to the church for its*
40 *edification, we license you to exhort, i.e. to speak a word of edification, wherever God in His*
41 *providence may call you; and for this purpose, may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the spirit of*
42 *Christ fill your heart. Amen."*

43 SECTION 10. The presbytery shall record the licensure in its minutes and provide the licentiate with a
44 certificate of licensure in the following form:

45 At _____ on the _____ day of _____ the Presbytery of
46 _____ of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, having received testimonials

1 in favor of _____, of his being in the communion of the church, of his piety and
2 exemplary life, of his proficiency in divinity and other studies, and of his personal zeal for the
3 gospel and his ability to present it to others, approved all these parts of trial; and he having
4 adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions to be
5 put to candidates to be licensed, the presbytery did license to exhort as a probationer for the
6 holy ministry within the bounds of this presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called.
7 This certificate shall either be renewed or expire at the next regular presbytery meeting
8 following the two year anniversary of the date of issuance.

9 SECTION 11. When any candidate for licensure shall have occasion, while his trials are going on, to
10 remove from the bounds of his own regional presbytery into those of another, the latter presbytery, on
11 his producing proper testimonial from the former, may take up his trials at the point at which they were
12 interrupted, and conduct them to a conclusion.

13 SECTION 12. A licentiate shall move outside the limits of his regional presbytery for an extended
14 period of time only by permission of his presbytery; in such a case an extract of the record of his
15 licensure and a statement of his service as a licentiate, signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials to
16 the regional presbytery under whose jurisdiction he shall come. When a licentiate shall undertake
17 regular duties within the bounds of a regional presbytery he shall place himself under the jurisdiction
18 of its presbytery.

19 SECTION 13. Ordinarily, when a period of two years have passed (or at the next regular presbytery
20 meeting following the two year anniversary), if a licentiate's services do not appear to be edifying to
21 the church, or he is not actively seeking a call to ministerial service except for reasons of furthering his
22 preparation for the ministry, the regional presbytery in which the licentiate currently resides may, if it
23 think proper, decline to renew, or recall his license.

24 SECTION 14. Ruling elders *not* seeking ordination may be licensed by the regional presbytery to exhort
25 (see DCO 8:2). The educational and other requirements for licensure set forth in this chapter will serve
26 as guidelines for the regional presbytery, but may be adjusted and/or waived according to the regional
27 presbytery's wisdom. In no case shall the examination in theology on the floor of the presbytery be
28 waived (see section 5 above).

29 SECTION 15: Licentiates from outside the CRPC, upon request of their receiving congregational
30 presbytery, shall be re-examined for licensure upon transfer of membership to the CRPC. The services
31 of a licentiate with a "license to preach" from outside of the CRPC may be utilized within the CRPC at
32 the discretion of the congregational presbytery who seeks his services, but his license "to preach" will
33 be considered as a license to exhort within the CRPC and shall otherwise abide by such limitations as
34 any licentiate from within the CRPC as set forth by our Constitution and By-Laws.

35

1 **CHAPTER 22**
2 **EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION**
3

4 This chapter contains the process by which previously unordained men shall be examined by the regional
5 presbytery.

6 SECTION 1: The request for Ordination Examination from a local church shall include the following
7 accompanied documentation:

8 1) Letter of recommendation from the Church where the Candidate is a member.

9 2) Copy of Letter of Call to the Candidate from a Church (if relevant).

10 3) Copy of Letter to the Church of Acceptance of the Call by the Candidate (if relevant).

11 4) Letters of academic attestation (as many as possible and as relevant).

12 5) The Candidate's answers to the questions of the Checklist for Church Officers (Appendix A)
13 along with any other letters of attestation or reference and his agreement to abide by the
14 limitations in DCO 31 should any exceptions/scruples be noted..

15 6) The Candidate's completion of the *Questionnaire For Candidates Licensing, Ordination Or*
16 *Reception As Ministers From Other Denominations* (Appendix B) if required in advance by
17 presbytery .

18 SECTION 2: Presbytery (or her appointees) shall determine that the accompanied documentation is in
19 good order and that the Examination may take place. It is strongly advised that such documentation
20 be submitted 45 days to give presbyters opportunity to thoroughly examine them and inquire about
21 anything that might be missing so as to preclude a candidates arrival without all the proper
22 documentation. It shall be the task of the convening church to verify that what is submitted meets
23 the requirements of this chapter and to notify the calling church of any omissions as soon as
24 possible, for their prompt submission.

25 SECTION 3: Presbytery (or her appointees) shall appoint specific Presbyters to be Examiners and
26 backups for each area, as defined below in SECTION 7 to be called upon whenever examinations
27 are needed. Examiners shall be prepared with basic questions in their area of examination.

28 SECTION 4: Examiners will provide relevant texts (for sermon and exegesis) to the Candidate in
29 advance.

30 SECTION 5: It is understood that the Examination is to be a "pastoral examination". The exam is not
31 meant to be exhaustive in any area (which would assume that one could know it all). It is meant to
32 give the Candidate an opportunity to show his wisdom and ability in applying the Scriptures
33 pastorally in the various areas (as compared to merely knowing academic details). As such the
34 Examination may also expose areas of "weakness," where a Candidate may need to improve or
35 further develop his understanding, proficiency, or orthodoxy.

36 SECTION 6: It is thus understood that the Examination is to be especially geared toward discerning
37 the Biblical orthodoxy of a Candidate. (i.e. That what he knows is in keeping with Biblical and
38 confessional Truth).

39 SECTION 7: The following areas shall be included (Examiner shall first examine and then allow time
40 to Presbyters. Presbytery may set time limits depending upon the total time allotted for the

1 examination process, but these time limits may be extended by majority vote.) :

2 1) Sermon Examination (on specific text)

3 2) Old Testament Exegesis Examination (exegesis of specific text demonstrating his proficiency in
4 the use of the Hebrew language in such). See "Exegesis Examination Guidelines" found in DCO
5 Appendix E.³⁴¹

6 3) New Testament Exegesis Examination (exegesis of specific text demonstrating his proficiency in
7 the use of the Koine Greek language in such). See "Exegesis Examination Guidelines" found in
8 DCO Appendix E.

9 4) Doctrine and Creeds

10 5) Church History

11 6) Church Polity

12 7) Ethics

13 8) Pastoral Theology & Practice

14 9) View & Knowledge of Scripture

15 10) Personal Faith & Life

16 SECTION 8: Sermon Examination shall normally consist of a written message delivered to the
17 Examiner and the message delivered orally (a) to the Presbytery (with local Church members
18 invited to attend), or (b) the message delivered in a stated worship service (with the examiner and at
19 least one other Presbyter present).³⁴²

20 SECTION 9: After the Sermon Examination, Presbytery shall go into Closed Session for discussion
21 and confirmation that the remainder of the Examination may continue.

22 SECTION 10: Presbytery may recess at any time(s) during examination, but at the conclusion shall go
23 into Closed Session to discuss the Examination and determine if the Candidate has sustained the
24 Examination. There should be a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote in favor of the candidate's performance in items 2,
25 3 and 4, and at least a majority in all the others for his total examination to be sustained.

26 SECTION 11: Upon sustaining the Examination, the Candidate shall be informed and prayer of thanks
27 given. If the Candidate has not sustained the examination, he shall be notified how he may rectify
28 the areas of concern and shall also be notified that he, through the calling Church, may request a
29 further exam.

30 SECTION 12: Plans and details for Ordination and Installation shall then be established as is
31 convenient to the calling Church following the procedures similar to those in Chapter 21 (Licensing
32 Candidates to Exhort) but using the following procedures and vows:

33 1) At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed
34 in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery with the congregation present. The

³⁴¹ Identical changes made to subsections 2) & 3) at 11-2014 American Presbytery. See minutes for details.

³⁴² *Sermon* changed to *message* and *preached* changed to *delivered* at 07-2009 American Presbytery. See Minutes 13, B on DCO 22.

1 home church should request a minister of Presbytery to]...preach a sermon appropriate to the
2 occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform those assembled concerning the warrant
3 and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God and concerning the duties which the
4 minister's service will place upon him, and shall endeavor to give them a proper sense of the
5 solemnity of both ordination to the office and installation in his field of service. Then addressing
6 the candidate he shall propose to him the following questions:

7 *a) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only*
8 *infallible rule of faith and practice?*

9 *b) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as*
10 *containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?*

11 *c) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Covenant Reformed*
12 *Presbyterian Church?*

13 *d) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?*

14 *e) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy*
15 *ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?*

16 *f) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the*
17 *purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise*
18 *unto you on that account?*

19 *g) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties*
20 *which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of*
21 *your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with*
22 *exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?*

23 *h) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking*
24 *upon you the work of a Minister of the Word of God you are influenced by a sincere desire to*
25 *promote the glory of God and the good of his church?*

26 *i) Are you now willing to undertake the work of a Minister of the Word of God, and do you*
27 *promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you*
28 *strength?*

29 2) The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, he shall then kneel, and by
30 prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, he
31 shall be solemnly ordained to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall
32 rise and the moderator shall declare him to be ordained a minister of the Word of God and
33 installed as of a Minister of the Word of God. The presbytery shall then extend to him the right
34 hand of fellowship.

35

1 **CHAPTER 23**
2 **THE MINISTERIAL CALL³⁴³**
3

4 SECTION 1. A minister or licentiate may be called to the pastoral ministry of a congregation either by
5 the congregational presbytery or by the congregational presbytery of oversight where no
6 congregational presbytery exists in which the church is a member.

7 SECTION 2. The congregational presbytery shall issue any invitations to preach/exhort³⁴⁴ and is the
8 only body which shall have the authority in the congregation to issue a call.

9 SECTION 3. The one called should normally preach/exhort at least twice to the congregation and must
10 sustain a thorough examination before the congregational presbytery. A minister, even from within the
11 CRPC, must be examined by the congregational presbytery extending the call so that there is
12 familiarity with the minister's understanding. The examination by the congregational presbytery must
13 include theology, the Westminster standards, and any subordinate confessions of the church (including
14 its Covenant).

15 SECTION 4. The congregational presbytery will also inquire of any exceptions/scruples the potential
16 ministerial candidate may have with regard to the Westminster standards. Any such
17 exceptions/scruples shall be recorded and the congregational presbytery will indicate by vote whether
18 it finds such exceptions/scruples to be allowable. The congregational presbytery will make these
19 exceptions/scruples known to the congregation should it nominate the candidate to the congregation.
20 The congregational presbytery, should a call be issued by the congregation, will forward those
21 exceptions/scruples and the action taken to the regional presbytery for consideration. More
22 information pertaining to ministerial scruples is set forth in DCO 31.

23 SECTION 5. The congregational presbytery shall issue the call only after a congregational meeting has
24 taken place at which the congregational presbytery presents its report supporting the call. The
25 congregation shall agree by vote, with the vote being taken by secret ballot. Three-fourth ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the
26 voting members present at the meeting is necessary to issue the call. If the vote meets this requirement
27 but is not unanimous, the moderator and the congregational presbytery shall seek to persuade the
28 minority to concur in the call. A new ballot shall be taken. This ballot shall be the decision of the
29 congregation. A report of all the proceedings shall be sent to the regional presbytery.

30 SECTION 6. If, at any time before the second ballot (Section 5 above) the congregational presbytery
31 deems there to be serious dissension in the congregation, it may wait in order to meet privately with
32 those who dissent. If so, then a new congregational meeting shall be called, if the congregational
33 presbytery so choose, and the process shall begin again.

34 SECTION 7. The congregational presbytery may send as many officers to the next regional presbytery
35 meeting as it shall deem necessary in order to present its desire to call the candidate. Any dissenting
36 officer may be present to explain to the regional presbytery the dissent of those who would wish to
37 deny the call. The dissent may not address the terms of the call (Section 8).

38 SECTION 8. The terms of the call are matters strictly between the congregational presbytery and the one
39 called as to financial matters, housing, benefits, vacation time, and contingency matters. If requested
40 by the candidate or the congregational presbytery, the regional presbytery has the right to inspect and

³⁴³ Many of the issues of this section have already been footnoted. Otherwise they pertain to 1 Cor. 14:40.

³⁴⁴ *Exhort* added to *preached* in Sections 2-3 to cover the case of a licentiate at 07-2009 American Presbytery. See Minutes 13, B on DCO 23.

1 to give counsel to both parties regarding the terms of the call but has no power either to mandate or
2 forbid such terms. Once the terms are approved by the congregational presbytery, such terms are not
3 subject to appeal to regional presbytery unless: 1) the terms have been violated by the minister of the
4 Word or the congregational presbytery, and 2) the issue has already been adjudicated by the
5 congregational presbytery.

6 SECTION 9. The regional presbytery, upon receiving a call to a candidate from the congregational
7 presbytery, may find the call in order, may refer it to the congregational presbytery, or deny the call. If
8 the regional presbytery does not find the call in order, there must be a written report to the
9 congregational presbytery containing a thorough explanation of the regional presbytery's action, said
10 report to be composed and adopted by the regional presbytery prior to the close of that meeting. The
11 ministerial candidate will indicate to the congregational presbytery and the regional presbytery his
12 intention to accept the call if sustained in examination prior to said examinations proceeding.

13 SECTION 10. The regional presbytery will inquire of any exceptions/scruples the potential ministerial
14 candidate may have with regard to the Westminster standards. Any such exceptions/scruples shall be
15 recorded and the presbytery will indicate by vote whether it finds such exceptions/scruples to be
16 allowable and so inform the candidate. Any exception/scruple that is not allowed by the regional
17 presbytery will be cause for refusing to ordain and/or install the man as a minister in the calling
18 church. In the case of a current CRPC minister, an exception/scruple previously found to be allowable
19 in his case will continue to be allowed by the regional presbytery. Any new or changed
20 exceptions/scruples are subject to review and approval by the regional presbytery. More information
21 pertaining to ministerial scruples is set forth in DCO 31.

22 SECTION 11. If the call is to a licentiate of the CRPC, the regional presbytery must first decide if he has
23 satisfactorily completed his probationary training and determine his fitness for office through
24 examination. The trials for ordination for a licentiate of the CRPC shall consist of those mandated for
25 licensure, with the addition of examinations in apologetics and the CRPC Book of Church
26 Government. The regional presbytery may waive those areas of examination previously sustained for
27 licensure within the CRPC with the exception of theology, which must be held before the regional
28 presbytery. If one-fourth of the presbyters present at the meeting are dissatisfied with the examination
29 in theology, the candidate shall be required to continue the examination at a future meeting of the
30 regional presbytery. If the licentiate lacks competency in the Hebrew and Greek languages, and this
31 requirement was previously waived in accordance with Section 7 of Chapter 20 of the DCO, the
32 regional presbytery may vote to refuse to ordain the man until satisfied with progress, proceed with
33 ordination after setting a further period of time for the licentiate to satisfactorily complete any study in
34 the original languages the presbytery deems fit (see Section 11 below), or waive the requirement in
35 consideration of unusual and/or special circumstances by a three-quarter ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the presbytery.

36 SECTION 12. If the call is to a licentiate from outside the CRPC, the procedure outlined in Section 10
37 will be followed, with the exception that no part of trial may be waived until and only if the regional
38 presbytery: (1) is satisfied that the licentiate was examined by a denomination or other ecclesiastical
39 body of similar faith and practice, and (2) receives information about licentiate's previous
40 examinations (other than from the licentiate) and is satisfied by those examinations in those areas.
41 Further, if the regional presbytery finds that the candidate lacks competency in the Hebrew and Greek
42 languages, or one of them, it may judge by a vote of the members present to waive these requirements
43 prior to ordination only when the applicant has given an affirmative answer to the following question:

44 *Do you promise that you will make an effort to attain competency in those languages*
45 *until the regional presbytery is satisfied?*

46 The regional presbytery will set specific time limits for completion of such efforts and require that the
47 congregational presbytery report at that time to the regional presbytery concerning progress or lack

1 thereof. At that point, the regional presbytery will determine what further action would be appropriate.

2 SECTION 13. If the regional presbytery is satisfied with the trials of a licentiate for ordination, it shall
3 then proceed to ordain and install the man in the office of minister for that particular congregation in a
4 timely manner. The regional presbytery shall coordinate the calling of a meeting of the local
5 congregation for a service of ordination and installation, or may appoint a committee to serve as the
6 regional presbytery's representatives to do the same, and said committee to report back to the
7 presbytery at the next regular meeting. Teaching elders of the regional presbytery shall conduct the
8 service of ordination and installation.

9 SECTION 14. If the call is to a minister outside the CRPC, the regional presbytery shall require him to
10 give evidence of possessing the qualifications in regard to piety, faith, and learning that are required of
11 licentiates under Section 11. This evidence shall include testimonials from qualified persons of his
12 satisfactory exercise of the gifts for the ministry of the Word. The presbytery may require examination
13 in any or all the areas set forth and referred to in Section 11, but they are not required. The presbytery
14 or its committee will determine the best course of action in each case. In no case shall an examination
15 in theology on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present at the meeting
16 are dissatisfied with the examination in theology, the minister shall be required to continue the
17 examination at a future meeting of the regional presbytery.

18 SECTION 15. If the regional presbytery is satisfied with a candidate falling under Section 14, it shall
19 then proceed to install the man in the office of minister for that particular congregation in a timely
20 manner. The regional presbytery shall coordinate the calling of a meeting of the local congregation for
21 a service of installation, or may appoint a committee to serve as the regional presbytery's
22 representatives to do the same, and said committee to report back to the presbytery at the next regular
23 meeting. Teaching elders of the regional presbytery shall conduct the service of installation.

24 SECTION 16. If the call is to a minister (with or without a current call) within the CRPC, there shall be
25 no examinations. The regional presbytery, after fulfilling the requirements of Sections 9 and 10 and
26 finding no hurdle to proceeding, will install the minister in a timely manner.

27 SECTION 17. No minister may leave his charge without the prior approval of both his congregational
28 and regional presbyteries.

29 SECTION 18. Failure of a pastor or church to abide by the terms of its contract may be appealed to the
30 regional presbytery when it becomes apparent that all attempts to agree have failed. Either party may
31 appeal to the regional presbytery which shall determine the nature of the problem, hold the contracting
32 parties to the contract (determining explicitly the duration of same), discipline for refusal to abide by
33 the terms or send the issue back with a mandate to reconcile. If the church is delinquent, its officers
34 shall be chargeable to the regional presbytery and disciplined for willful failure and breach of contract.
35 Such officers, if in gross rebellion, may be divested of office and further disciplined as the case may
36 require. If the pastor be in breach of contract, then the congregational presbytery may divest him of
37 office and discipline him further as the case may require. If the breach of contract occur as a result of
38 unforeseen contingencies beyond the control of any parties, or failure of the church to function as a
39 church, then the congregational presbytery may dissolve the contractual relationship, require whatever
40 payments can be made from its assets, and assist the parties in their attempts to continue the
41 relationship and/or functioning of the church, at the discretion of the regional presbytery.

42 SECTION 19. While ministers are members of their local church, their ministerial credentials are held
43 by the regional presbytery. In CRPC churches, ministers are under the original jurisdiction of the
44 congregational presbytery of the local church in matters of character, behavior, and ethic, while in
45 matters of doctrine and credentials the regional presbytery has original jurisdiction.

46 SECTION 20. The congregational presbytery of the church is the court of original jurisdiction in all

1 matters of ethics, character and behavior for the minister of the Word as well as all members. The
2 regional presbytery will receive the ministerial credentials for the minister of the Word from an outside
3 body when it receives him into its oversight. Upon establishing a minister of the Word in a particular
4 call, the regional presbytery then will "pass" to the calling congregational presbytery all matters
5 contained in his credentials which are not doctrinal so that the congregational presbytery retains its
6 original jurisdiction without jurisdictional conflict. If the minister of the Word should leave his call in
7 order to pursue a call elsewhere, the regional presbytery will inquire of the congregational presbytery
8 concerning the ethical portion of his credentials. Finding that, and all other matters pertaining to him
9 over which the congregational presbytery has authority to be in order, and he to be in good standing;
10 the regional presbytery will "receive" from the congregational presbytery the oversight and use of that
11 portion of his credentials and will either pass his credentials to a body outside the regional presbytery
12 to which he intends to minister or pass the ethical portion of his credentials to another body within the
13 regional presbytery.

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1 **CHAPTER 24**

2 **DISSOLVING MINISTERIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

3 SECTION 1. When a pastor desires to resign his pastoral call in order to accept another or similar call
4 within the CRPC, he shall follow the provisions already stipulated herein.

5 SECTION 2. If a minister of the Word is disposed to accept another call as pastor, he shall inform the
6 congregational presbytery of his desire and ask them to concur in requesting the regional presbytery to
7 dissolve the pastoral relationship. If the congregational presbytery declines to concur, then he may
8 appeal to the regional presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship with the congregation. The
9 regional presbytery, upon receipt of the appeal for a dissolution of the pastoral relationship, may grant
10 the appeal, require the continuance of the pastoral relationship, or require the parties involved to give
11 the matters further consideration. If the pastoral relationship is dissolved, the congregational
12 presbytery shall declare the pulpit vacant as of the specified date.

13 SECTION 3. If any congregational presbytery desires to be relieved of a minister of the Word it may ask
14 him to resign through a properly called congregational meeting³⁴⁵ (three-fourths (3/4) vote of the
15 assembled voting members). If the minister of the Word agrees to do so, the congregational presbytery
16 shall be requested to assign a mutually acceptable date. The congregation shall continue the terms of
17 its agreement until that date.³⁴⁶

18 SECTION 4. If the minister of the Word is not willing to resign his call, then the congregational
19 presbytery may petition the regional presbytery to dissolve the ministerial relationship.³⁴⁷

20 SECTION 5. The regional presbytery may grant the appeal, but not before the minister of the Word has
21 had opportunity to present his position and claims to it in the next regional presbytery meeting.³⁴⁸
22 Regional presbytery may urge the congregation to reconsider its position and send commissioners to
23 help the church and the minister of the Word in such a case.

24 SECTION 6. In all cases of appeal, until the appropriate court shall determine the case, all parties shall
25 continue to fulfill their duties, obligations and contracts.³⁴⁹

26 SECTION 7. If a minister desires to dissolve his relationship with a body which is not a presbytery, he
27 shall inform his congregational presbytery of his desire. The body may appeal this decision to the
28 congregational presbytery if it chooses.³⁵⁰

29 SECTION 8. If a minister desires to resign his call in order to undertake another kind of labor, he shall
30 offer his written resignation and seek the concurrence of the body and his respective presbyteries,
31 asking for its approval in the labor he seeks to undertake. The congregational presbytery shall
32 determine the matter as already stated, and will indicate if such labor is in accord with his ministerial
33 vows.³⁵¹

34 SECTION 9. If a congregational presbytery approves the labor he desires to undertake and the body he is
35 leaving is in agreement, then the parties shall determine a mutually acceptable date and inform the

³⁴⁵ See DCO 17:4.

³⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 5:19-20.

³⁴⁷ 1 Tim. 4:14; 3Jo 1:9-10.

³⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³⁴⁹ Deu. 1:17.

³⁵⁰ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³⁵¹ See Appendix B.

1 regional presbytery of this agreement. If the body does not agree, then it may send representatives to
2 the regional presbytery to plead its case. Regional presbytery may agree to the resignation or deny
3 it.³⁵²

4 SECTION 10. When a minister desires to resign a call without other ministerial work in view, he shall
5 follow the procedures outlined above. If the regional presbytery grants his request, then it shall advise
6 him concerning any future resumption of ministerial labor.

7 SECTION 11. A minister without call must be reviewed in one year. After a second year without a call,
8 he shall be reviewed and warned. Thereafter, he may be removed by the regional presbytery. Non-
9 pastoral calls for ministers must be to ministries that the regional presbytery approves.

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³⁵² Rom. 11:29; 1 Cor. 14:40.

CHAPTER 25
MISSIONS

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3 SECTION 1. Foreign missions, their agencies and bodies are to be undertaken by local churches who
4 may invite participation of other local churches.³⁵³

5 SECTION 2. Congregations may start a mission work in the hope of establishing a church. If so, and
6 regional presbytery agree, the congregational presbytery of the founding church shall continue to be
7 the ecclesiastical authority of the daughter work. Such individuals in the work, though not yet
8 constituted a church, may become members at the discretion of the congregational presbytery and their
9 own voluntary desire to come under such oversight.³⁵⁴

10 SECTION 3. A mission work with two or more families and which has a sufficient number of
11 men to constitute a Session may petition its mother church to become a local church, which, if
12 approved, must also be approved by the regional presbytery.

13 SECTION 4. A mission work shall maintain its own roll of members, in the same manner as a
14 local church. In matters requiring congregational vote of the mission work, the communicant
15 members may vote, according to criteria for voting established by the governing body of the
16 local church which has oversight of the mission work.

17 SECTION 5. For purposes of mission work oversight, an acting congregational presbytery may be
18 established for a mission work at the discretion of the founding congregational presbytery and must
19 consist of two or more elders which need not be members of the mission work. The powers of the
20 acting congregational presbytery are to be determined by the founding congregational presbytery. An
21 acting congregational presbytery may not try judicial cases.

22 SECTION 6: Any particular church, where the majority of members leave the congregation or where the
23 congregation leaves the CRPC leaving a minority of former members within the CRPC and which no
24 longer meets the requirements of particular congregation in the CRPC (DCO 25:3), shall be declared
25 by the regional presbytery of which it is a member, a mission church. In such a case, that mission
26 church may operate under the temporary oversight of a particularized CRPC church or may operate
27 under the oversight of the regional presbytery until such time as it is capable of being a particularized
28 church in its own right with office-bearers from within its own congregation.³⁵⁵

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³⁵³ Acts 11:22.

³⁵⁴ Mat. 28:19-20.

³⁵⁵ This section added at 6-2007 American Presbytery. See minutes for grounds and details.

CHAPTER 26

ORGANIZING AND RECEIVING CONGREGATIONS

SECTION 1. A group of believers may be organized through the efforts of one or more congregations. If organized through the efforts of a church or churches in the regional presbytery, upon attaining status as a church, it shall be its own authority and no longer under the jurisdiction of any other church or churches.³⁵⁶

SECTION 2.³⁵⁷ In organizing a congregation from a mission work the presiding congregational presbytery shall do the following:

- 1) supervise the creation of a new constitution which accepts and reflects all the standards of the CRPC.
- 2) a list of members shall be drawn up and shall become the charter roll of the new congregation;
- 3) the overseeing congregational presbytery shall present a petition to the regional presbytery to organize them;
- 4) the congregational presbytery shall call a congregational meeting for the purpose of presenting nominations for officers and begin the process of calling a new pastor as needed;
- 5) such a meeting shall be held apart from the attendance of the members of the mother church.
- 6) the charter roll members may vote in all matters placed before them by their presiding congregational presbytery;
- 7) nominees for office shall sustain examinations by the presiding congregational presbytery which shall inform the regional presbytery of the new congregational presbytery and the names associated with it.

SECTION 3. A congregation not belonging to the CRPC, may be received under the authority of the regional presbytery with the sponsorship of at least one member church of the CRPC. The sponsoring congregational presbytery shall examine the petitioning congregational presbytery with respect to their subscription to the standards of the CRPC.³⁵⁸ The sponsoring congregational presbytery may bring a motion to the broader presbytery to receive the sponsored congregation into the presbytery.

SECTION 4. Regional presbytery shall guarantee that all the requirements normally needed for the calling to office of any other officer in the CRPC, shall be met in all the officers of any congregation received.³⁵⁹

SECTION 5. The presiding congregational presbytery shall be construed as the presbytery most closely related to the churches in the locale chosen. If there is any question of which congregational presbytery shall preside, then the broader assembly in existence shall determine the issue.³⁶⁰

SECTION 6. The CRPC shall receive all founding churches and their officers without subsequent examination as they are already organized, so long as they have officers as listed herein and are agreeable to the standards of the CRPC.³⁶¹

³⁵⁶ All churches in the New Testament have the same respect accorded to them by the apostles.

³⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 14:40.

³⁵⁸ Acts 11:20-23.

³⁵⁹ 1 Tim. 4:14; Tit. 1:1-5.

³⁶⁰ Deut. 1:17; 1 Cor. 14:40.

³⁶¹ 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1:1-5.

1 SECTION 7. The founding churches are: Covenant Reformed Church of Brookfield, Wisconsin;
2 Covenant Reformed Church of Rayville, Missouri and its mission work The King's Reformed
3 Presbyterian Church, Fellsmere, Florida; Providence Reformed Church, Ft. Collins, Colorado; and
4 Westminster Reformed Church, Sheldon, Iowa.³⁶²

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³⁶² Originally submitted to the first formative meeting of the CRPC on June 23, 1998 by Pastor Wayne Sedlak on behalf of the session of Covenant Reformed Church.

CHAPTER 27
WITHDRAWAL OF CHURCHES

SECTION 1. No church may leave the CRPC over an issue that was a matter of allowable diversity as set forth in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2 at the time that the church applied for membership or was organized.

SECTION 2. A congregation may withdraw from the CRPC only according to the following procedure:

- 1) Before calling a congregational meeting for the purpose of taking any action on withdrawing from the CRPC, the congregational presbytery shall inform the regional presbytery at the next stated face-to-face³⁶³ meeting of the CRPC (adhering to the forty-five day notice as set forth in DCO 18:10) of its intention to call such a congregational meeting.³⁶⁴ The congregational presbytery shall provide grounds for its intended withdrawal in this communication to the regional presbytery. The convening church shall include the item in the docket for the upcoming meeting of the regional presbytery.
- 2) At the meeting of the regional presbytery, the regional presbytery will:
 - (a) respond verbally or in writing to the congregational presbytery at the meeting; or,
 - (b) prepare a written response to the congregational presbytery through representatives appointed for this purpose, with said written response to be presented to the congregational presbytery no later than three weeks after the adjournment of the regional presbytery meeting.³⁶⁵
- 3) Further, the regional presbytery may appoint up to two presbyters to be present at any congregational meeting of the church contemplating withdrawal. Said representative(s) will be granted the privilege of the floor at any congregational meeting called to vote upon withdrawing from the CRPC.³⁶⁶ If no representative(s) is (are) appointed for this purpose at the stated meeting of paragraph B above, the right of the regional presbytery to be present at the congregational meeting (see DCO 17:9.5) is waived.
- 4) If the congregational presbytery is not dissuaded by the actions of paragraph B above, it may issue a call for a congregational meeting. The date of said congregational meeting shall be no less than ninety days following the communication to the regional presbytery mentioned in paragraph A above (see DCO 17:9.5) and no sooner than four weeks following the regional presbytery meeting of paragraph B above.³⁶⁷ The call for the congregational meeting shall contain the congregational presbytery's recommendation to voluntarily withdraw with its written grounds. If the regional presbytery has prepared a written response (1.B.ii above), it shall be distributed with the call to the congregational meeting.
- 5) If the call for a congregational meeting for the purpose of voting on withdrawing from the CRPC is issued, the congregational presbytery will inform the regional presbytery. The communications secretary will forward this notice to all ministers and churches of the CRPC. Any CRPC presbyter may communicate in writing his concerns and arguments for not withdrawing to the congregational presbytery. The congregational presbytery may, but is not obligated, to present any, any part of, or all of the communications received under this paragraph to the congregation. Only the representatives appointed in paragraph C above will be permitted to attempt to dissuade the congregation from withdrawing on the floor of the congregational meeting.

³⁶³ "face-to-face" added at 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. R. for details and grounds.

³⁶⁴ Prov 12:15; 15:22; 20:18; Eph. 5:21

³⁶⁵ Acts 15:23; Prov 11:14; 18:17

³⁶⁶ Prov 18:13, 17

³⁶⁷ Prov. 21:5

1 6) Withdrawal from the CRPC requires three-fourths of voting members, voting by written secret
2 ballot, for approval (see DCO 17:9.5).

3 7) If the vote of the congregation approves withdrawing, that church shall no longer be considered a
4 congregation of the CRPC as of the next stated meeting of the CRPC, or on the date six months
5 after the vote of the congregation, whichever date is sooner.³⁶⁸

6 SECTION 3. No special meeting of the CRPC (as set forth in DCO 18:12 for “emergency presbytery
7 meetings”)³⁶⁹ shall be called for the purpose of dealing with a notice of intention to withdraw.

8 SECTION 4. Any church contemplating withdrawal will inform its members that individuals may
9 continue as members of the CRPC if they so desire. The congregational presbytery will provide a list
10 of such members to the CRPC no later than the next stated meeting of the CRPC. The regional
11 presbytery will take action to provide for the oversight of said members.³⁷⁰

12 SECTION 5. Reimbursement of costs associated with the attendance of the regional presbytery’s
13 representatives as per paragraph 1.C above will normally be borne by the church contemplating
14 withdrawal. ³⁷¹ If said church informs the regional presbytery that it cannot bear that cost, the
15 communications secretary will inform the regional presbytery and ask the churches to help reimburse
16 the costs of regional presbytery’s representatives.³⁷²

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³⁶⁸ 1 Cor 14:33

³⁶⁹ Parenthetical statement added at 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. R. for details and grounds.

³⁷⁰ Acts 20:28

³⁷¹ 2 Cor 10:8

³⁷² 2 Cor 8:13-15

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CHAPTER 28
DISSOLUTION OF CHURCHES

SECTION 1. A congregation may petition the regional presbytery with the approval of both the congregational presbytery and the consent of the congregation at a duly called congregational meeting per DCO 17:9, 6) to submit a request to dissolve the congregation to the regional presbytery.

SECTION 2: The Regional presbytery will grant the request to dissolve and shall oversee the transfer and dismissal of all members of the particular congregation seeking to dissolve in consultation with the congregational presbytery (per DCO 18:1 and 2).

1 **CHAPTER 29**
2 **THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS AMENDMENT**
3

4 SECTION 1. The Constitution of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, subordinate to the
5 Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, consists of its standards of doctrine, polity, and worship, as
6 adopted by the church. Subordinate to the Constitution are the By-Laws: Principles and Practices of
7 Church Life, consisting of the Directory of Church Order; Directory of Church Discipline; and
8 Directory of Church Worship.

9 SECTION 2. Amendments to the By-Laws: Principles and Practices of Church Life. [Except as noted
10 in Section 6 below,] The Directory of Church Order, the Directory of Church Discipline and the
11 Directory of Church Worship may be amended only in the following manner:

- 12 a. Proposed amendments may be made only by congregational or regional presbyteries, or
13 by a teaching elder, and must be accompanied with grounds when submitted to the American
14 presbytery. If the proposed amendment(s) are by a teaching elder alone, he must follow the
15 provision of DCO 18:9. The forty-five day requirement of DCO 18:10 applies.
- 16 b. The American presbytery, after due discussion, shall propose the amendment(s) to the
17 regional presbyteries. Grounds must accompany the proposed amendment(s) when sent to the
18 regional presbyteries (which may be the same or different from the original grounds).
- 19 c. The regional presbyteries will have six months to vote on the proposed amendment(s).
20 Each regional presbytery shall notify the American presbytery of the action taken by each
21 regional presbytery. Approval of the proposed amendment(s) is by majority vote of members
22 voting. Failure of a regional presbytery to vote on the proposed amendment(s) or to report the
23 action taken by the regional presbytery prior to the convening of the meeting of the American
24 presbytery following the expiration of the six month voting period will be construed an abstention
25 by that regional presbytery.
- 26 d. The American presbytery will take action on the proposed amendment(s) at the next
27 regular meeting of the American presbytery falling after the six month voting period. If a majority
28 of the reporting regional presbyteries approve the amendment(s), the said amendment(s) will
29 become effective on the first day of the second calendar month following adjournment of that
30 meeting of the American presbytery. (For example, if the American presbytery adjourns on March
31 31, the amendment(s) would be effective as of May 1. If the American presbytery were to adjourn
32 on April 1, the amendment(s) would be effective as of June 1.)

33 SECTION 3. Amendments to the doctrinal standards. [Except as noted in Section 6 below,] The
34 Constitution³⁷³, may be amended only in the following manner:

- 35 a. Proposed amendments may be made only by congregational or regional presbyteries, or
36 by a teaching elder, and must be accompanied with grounds when submitted to the American
37 presbytery. If the proposed amendment(s) are by a teaching elder alone, he must follow the
38 provision of DCO 18:9. The forty-five day requirement of DCO 18:10 applies.
- 39 b. The American presbytery will determine, by majority vote, if a suggested amendment is
40 worthy of consideration. If so determined, it will appoint a committee to consider any suggested
41 change and to report with recommendations at its next regular meeting or at a subsequent meeting
42 as determined by the American presbytery.

³⁷³ “Constitution”, as defined in DCO 29:1, replaced “The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, or any portion of the Three Forms of Unity” per Minutes of November 5-7, 2007 American Presbytery, Item XIV, T.

1 c. At the meeting at which the committee reports, the American presbytery may determine,
2 by a two-thirds majority of the members voting, to propose the amendment(s) to the regional
3 presbyteries.

4 d. The regional presbyteries will have six months to vote on the proposed amendment(s).
5 Each regional presbytery shall notify the American presbytery of the action taken by each
6 regional presbytery. Approval of the proposed amendment(s) is by two-thirds vote of members
7 voting. Failure of a regional presbytery to vote on the proposed amendment(s) or to report the
8 action taken by the regional presbytery prior to the convening of the meeting of the American
9 presbytery following the expiration of the six month voting period will be construed an abstention
10 by that regional presbytery.

11 e. The American presbytery will take action on the proposed amendment(s) at the next
12 regular meeting of the American presbytery falling after the six month voting period. If a majority
13 of the reporting regional presbyteries approve the amendment(s), it (they) shall be adopted only
14 after approved by a majority vote of the members voting at this meeting of the American
15 presbytery. If adopted, the said amendment(s) will become effective on the first day of the second
16 calendar month following adjournment of that meeting of the American presbytery. (For example,
17 if the American presbytery adjourns on March 31, the amendment(s) would be effective as of
18 May 1. If the American presbytery were to adjourn on April 1, the amendment(s) would be
19 effective as of June 1.)

20 SECTION 4. [Except as noted in Section 6 below,] Organic union of the Covenant Reformed
21 Presbyterian Church with another denomination shall follow the same procedure as in Section 3 above.

22 SECTION 5. [Except as noted in Section 6 below,] None of the provision of Sections 3 and 4 of this
23 chapter, nor of this fifth section, shall be modified except by the process that is set forth in Section 3.

24 SECTION 6. Temporary provisions. Until such time as the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church
25 grows to consist of a minimum of three regional presbyteries, some of the provisions of Sections 2
26 through 5 are not tenable. Therefore, the following temporary provisions will be followed until the
27 January 1 of the year following the establishment of a third regional presbytery within the CRPC.
28 Should a regional presbytery cease to exist and thereby bring the total number of existing regional
29 presbyteries back to two or fewer, these temporary provision will again be in force at that point.

30 a. With regard to Section 2:

31 i. 2.a applies.

32 ii. Proposed amendment(s) will be given a first reading by the American presbytery
33 at the meeting at which said amendment(s) is (are) introduced. A period of discussion for
34 clarification, but not for argument, will follow.

35 iii. The American presbytery, by two-thirds vote, shall then determine whether to
36 take up the proposed amendment(s) for consideration at that meeting, or to place it (them) on
37 the docket for the next regular meeting.

38 iv. The proposed amendment(s) will be adopted by a majority vote of the members
39 voting. The amendment(s) will become effective at the adjournment of that meeting.

40 b. With regard to Section 3:

41 i. Sections 3.a and 3.b apply.

42 ii. At the meeting of the American presbytery at which the committee brings its
43 recommendations, the presbytery will receive the report and recommendations.

44 iii. At its next regular meeting, the American presbytery shall vote on the proposed
45 amendment(s) after a period of discussion and debate. The proposed amendment(s) will be
46 adopted by a three-quarter majority vote of the members voting. The amendment(s) will

- 1 become effective at the adjournment of that meeting.
- 2 c. With regard to Section 4: Section 4 applies as modified by the temporary provisions for
- 3 Section 3 found in this sixth section.
- 4 d. With regard to Section 5: Section 5 applies as modified by the temporary provision for
- 5 Section 3 found in this sixth section.
- 6

1 **CHAPTER 30**
2 **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

3 **SECTION 1. Standardization of Minutes for Broader Presbyteries.**

- 4 1. All references to persons in the minutes be standardized, as possible, to include their office, first
5 name or initial, and last name. Any non-delegates of the CRPC referred to in the minutes will be
6 designated as such with appropriate titles. Church offices to be listed as teaching elder (TE),
7 ruling elder (RE), deacon.
- 8 2. Minutes should include motions and decisions that are made on them, but not the details of the
9 discussion unless called for.
- 10 3. Movers and seconders of motions made during the process of a meeting shall not be listed in the
11 minutes unless they come as part of advanced submitted overture.
- 12 4. Devotionals shall include the Scripture used.
- 13 5. Songs and Psalms sung shall be listed by titles.
- 14 6. Documents may be attached.

15 **SECTION 2. Records of Broader Presbyteries** All official records of the broader presbytery meetings
16 are to be held in the care of their respective Communications Secretaries. Draft copies and other
17 collateral materials may be kept and used by individual attendees but are not the official record of the
18 presbyteries.

19 **SECTION 3: Closed Session Records:** The records of a closed session part of a presbytery meeting are
20 to be made available to presbyters of that presbytery only and shall be kept confidential. (E.g.
21 Members of the American presbytery shall have access to the closed records of the American
22 presbytery; members of regional presbytery shall have access to the closed records of that regional
23 presbytery.) Closed session records of a congregational presbytery are under the authority of that
24 congregational presbytery. Only the presbytery and their fellow elders shall be privy to such records
25 (not deacons) with the following restrictions:

- 26 1. They are not to be published (refers to making any items known to any non-CRPC presbyter) in
27 whole or in part in any form without prior approval of the presbytery that holds the closed
28 records.
- 29 2. During the closed session, a determination as to what shall be recorded shall be made.
- 30 3. Re-opening closed session issues shall require a closed session to be heard.
- 31 4. Closed trial records shall be handled by applicable DCD procedures.
- 32 5. The congregational presbytery alone through its clerk may make requests for closed records of
33 broader presbyteries.

34 **SECTION 4. Communications Secretary** The Communications Secretary shall provide a copy of the
35 final minutes along with attachments from the last broader presbytery meeting for approval of the next
36 presbytery along with the docket for the next broader presbytery meeting.

37 **SECTION 5. Certificates and Credentials** A member of presbytery shall be designated as the maker of
38 certificates. Any changes in format (i.e. wording other than the names of the person and the signers)
39 shall receive the approval of the regional presbytery. All requests shall be submitted to the designated
40 maker of certificates. That designated maker of certificates, as well as the moderator or secretary of
41 the last regional presbytery meeting may sign the certificates. Two signatures are required. All
42 certificates and forms for credentials must be approved by the regional presbytery. The maker of
43 certificates shall also issue credential cards for ministers in good standing, with the same requirement

1 of two signatures. Approved certificates and credentials should have an expiration date shortly after
2 the next anticipated presbytery date and should be made available after each presbytery meeting with
3 the needed signatures.³⁷⁴

4 SECTION 6. **Position Papers:** All position papers approved by the broader presbytery will be filed in
5 Appendix A in a section titled Position Papers alphabetically and indexed appropriately.

6 SECTION 7. **Short Reports:** The short report will consist of the time and dates of the presbytery and a
7 short sentence on each significant item passed and on major items for discussion. More space may be
8 considered where more explanation needed at the discretion of the preparer. The short report should
9 generally be no more than two or three paragraphs. The general intent of the short report is to provide
10 a presbytery approved statement for the churches to bring to their congregations and/or place in their
11 church bulletins.

12 SECTION 8. **The Authorized Version of the Bible** will be used by the presbytery for public statements,
13 unless the presbytery specifies otherwise by majority vote in each case. We do not accept as
14 reasonable, any exclusive understanding of the Authorized or King James Bible as the only English
15 version authorized by God for use in His churches (much less “inspired” or “inerrant”), though it is
16 both acceptable and edifying for churches and brethren to use the Authorized Version as their church
17 Bible or for personal use.

18 SECTION 9. **Use of Robert’s Rules of Order:** Robert's Rules of Order have no authoritative standing
19 in the CRPC. (Presbytery may use them for wisdom on parliamentary procedure, but the authority of
20 their application comes solely from the presbytery as it meets together with a quorum.)³⁷⁵

21 SECTION 10. As broader presbyteries have the power to make decisions on matters that come before it
22 which are not clearly set forth in the DCO, DCD or DCW [as per DCO 18:11, 13)], in such cases
23 where a party is seeking direction that is not covered in these by-laws or something that is a matter of
24 interpretation where there is a known (or concern about a) difference of opinion as to the meaning of
25 some part of these by-laws, they shall do so by bringing such matters up at a meeting of the presbytery
26 (regular stated being the preferred). The presbytery will then advise the party with the query as to its
27 decision in that special case not covered in the by-laws or with respect to the interpretation of the by-
28 laws, so as to settle the matter. Such decision may be revisited. If the matter cannot be quickly settled
29 or further study is needed, then the presbytery may establish a committee to bring forth its
30 recommendations at the next regularly stated meeting. These by-laws and they alone, along with any
31 decisions of the presbytery, are the covenant by which presbyters in the CRPC are bound as long as
32 they not be found to be contrary to the Constitution in any way (a decision which the regional
33 presbytery will need to make, and which is appealable). Standard or historic practices of other
34 churches, other denominations or “Presbyterianism” or “the Reformed Church” practices may be
35 useful in many ways, BUT are NOT to be a basis of “common law” for use in the CRPC unless
36 otherwise set forth in its Constitution or By-laws.³⁷⁶

37

38

³⁷⁴ This sentence was added at the 12-2012 Presbytery. See minutes 14 B for details and grounds.

³⁷⁵ This section was added at the Special Called Presbytery of July 30, 2007.

³⁷⁶ This section was added at the 11-2007 Presbytery. See minutes XIV. Q. for details and grounds.

CHAPTER 31

EXCEPTIONS/SCRUPLES FOR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

SECTION 1. All use of the phrase “exceptions/scruples” in this chapter pertains to those NOT already set forth in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2 unless otherwise specified.

SECTION 2. All exceptions/scruples not covered elsewhere in these By-laws are covered by Sections 3 through 8 below.

SECTION 3. Any exceptions/scruples which arise after reception as an officer or licentiate will be dealt with as follows:

- 1). He shall notify the presbytery in writing of any exceptions/scruples. All counsel or decisions reached by a presbytery shall be spread in the minutes. Any approval of any exceptions/scruples must be approved by the broadest assembly or two-thirds of the regional presbyteries.
- 2). Any such exceptions/scruples shall not be publicly preached/exhorted³⁷⁷, taught or promoted unless set forth in the Constitution I, B, 1 or 2.
- 3). He may not vote on any matters pertaining to any of his exceptions/scruples during any presbyterial or congregational meeting. In the event that the presbytery does not grant approval to his exception(s)/scruple(s), he may withdraw them. If he cannot do either, the presbytery may proceed to deal with the man as otherwise provided by the By-Laws.
- 4). He may not propose any change for presbyterial consideration of any item to which he holds as an exception/scruple.

SECTION 4. Exceptions or clarifications set forth in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2 may be discussed and debated from time to time for better understanding and clarification when it is agreeable to the presbytery in which such discussion or debate is being proposed.

SECTION 5. In these or other discussions or writings, the public or private denouncing or deriding of individuals or churches which practice various positions set forth in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2 is not acceptable within the CRPC. Any discussion of said matters must be done in a gracious fashion, and in such a way as not to disturb the peace and unity of the church.

SECTION 6. It is not allowable to bring charges in any church court against anyone within the CRPC for a position set forth as allowable in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2.

SECTION 7. Any member who holds to or changes his position with respect to any exceptions/scruples **set forth** in Constitution I, 1 or 2 whether remaining in his church after changing his position or transferring to another church which does not hold to such a position, must do so knowing that the peace of the church should not be disturbed on matters over which there is allowable diversity.

SECTION 8. Any member who holds to any exceptions/scruples **not set forth** in Constitution I, B, 1 or 2 which are agreeable to the church in which he is a member must not disturb the peace of the church over such positions.

³⁷⁷ Exhort added to preach for the case of a licentiate per 07-2009 American Presbytery. See Minutes 13, B on DCO 31.

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Appendix A

Checklist for Church Officers

The following Checklist for Church Officers shall be set forth as a highly useful tool for all CRPC churches at the discretion of the congregational presbytery in evaluating and examining any officer (minister, ruling elder or deacon) of any churches, especially the office of Minister of the Gospel.

Checklist For Church Officers:

1. Written testimony of his life history and conversion to Christianity. (Ministers shall add a written statement as to their call to the ministry.)
2. A written history of church or denominational affiliations noting the approximate length of tenure, ministry engaged in, any offices held and circumstances and reasons for leaving. An applicant must disclose any pending or past disciplinary action by any ecclesiastical body (church or higher/broader assembly).
3. A written testimony from his wife (if applicable), concerning her conversion to Christianity, her testimony of support to her husband's ministry. Where possible, this should also include an interview with the wife without her husband present.
4. Letters of reference from personal Christian friends (three or more) who have known the applicant and his family for not less than two years and will testify that his children (where applicable) are in submission to their parent's (both husband and wife) authority.
5. An applicant disclose in writing any history of sin of a public nature or with the potential thereof (i.e. where all parties involved have not sought and received forgiveness), such as sexual misconduct, dishonesty, drunkenness, abuse of authority or other sins unbecoming a Christian (if not otherwise disclosed above regarding past or pending discipline). It would be in the best interests of the applicant to disclose which be categorized as a "skeleton in the closet" to avoid problems that might result from non-disclosure.
6. In the case of an applicant who has been divorced, a full explanation of the causes of the divorce should be submitted in writing along with proof. Taking into account WCF 24:6, all circumstances following the divorce and, if sinful, what evidence there has been of repentance, the presbytery shall determine if this divorce would disqualify or significantly hinder the applicant's ministry.
7. An applicant should disclose any debt (not secured by tangible collateral) beyond the equivalent of three months income so that presbytery may determine its possible effect upon his ministry.
8. The applicant should have three letters of references from ministers who adhere to reformed or Calvinistic theology.
9. An applicant disclose the nature of his baptism.
10. The applicant be willing to relinquish his membership in any ecclesiastical bodies of jurisdiction (i.e. having authority over him).
11. He disclose membership in any secret societies along with a justification for such membership.
12. An applicant provide in writing prior to his examination any areas where he has concerns, disagreement or questions with the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Book of Church Government of the CRPC. Every candidate for office should take special note regarding the limitations that are placed upon him regarding any exceptions/scruples he has that are not already allowed by Const. I,B, 1 or 2 and be prepared to abide by the provisions of DCO 31.
13. An applicant agree that all questions or disputes with the constitution (standards) of the CRPC are to be carried on only at presbytery and the higher/broader assemblies and that he will not preach or teach any questionable or disputed doctrines and practices.
14. An applicant be willing to make the vows applicable to his office according to the CRPC Book of Church Order.
15. An applicant agree to teach or preach the Word of God as summarized in the Westminster

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Standards and other acknowledged standards listed in the BCG in his church on a regular basis.

16. An applicant agree not to turn to the world to solve differences between the church and its members.
17. An applicant disclose any pending, anticipated or actual civil or criminal actions involving him or any organizations within which he has a responsible part.

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LICENTIATE AND ORDINATION CANDIDATES AND TRANSFERRING MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

The following Questionnaire shall either be provided Candidates for the Gospel Ministry in the CRPC as well as for those ministers transferring in from outside the CRPC ahead of time or be used as the basis for the required questions to be asked on basic issues on the floor of presbytery. All of these questions to which answers are known should be completed and provided to the Presbytery 45 days prior to any meeting, though they may also be utilized by the local church at an earlier time. A candidate is not expected to study for these questions, but simply asked to provide answers based upon what he presently knows on these subjects. Followup questions can be expected on the floor of presbytery.

If the answers are provided ahead of time, please use a separate paper to answer these questions, using both the question number and a simple summary of the question being answered. (NOTE: *The capitalized categories at the beginning of each question or category of questions is to assist the presbyters during the examination process. Applicant should leave them in the submitted Questionnaire.*)

1. <DOCTRINES & CREEDS> The CRPC holds to the original 1643 edition of the Westminster Standards (Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms) with some latitude for allowable exceptions as listed in the Directory of Discipline, Chapter 21 (DCD21). All exceptions by any officer or candidate for office to these standards, except as stated in DCD21 must be written out in advance. Please use this space or additional paper to state what, if any, exceptions you have. Also, please note any interpretations you have, which you do not consider exceptions, but which could be construed as outside the original intent of the framers of the Westminster Assembly or of the norm within historic Reformed understandings of these documents.
2. <DOCTRINES & CREEDS> What other Reformed confessional standards are you familiar with and what exceptions might you take with them (generally speaking)?
3. <PASTORAL THEOLOGY> Please answer the following questions on preaching:
 - A. Who may rightfully preach in the church?
 - B. Who has the authority to authorize to preach?
 - C. Explain your position on laymen “preaching.”
 - D. Explain your position on women preaching.
4. <CHURCH POLITY> Explain your position on the following matters pertaining to the church:
 - A. Explain the differences you see between the offices of teaching elder/minister, ruling elder and deacon.
 - B. What is your view on women performing ministerial functions, teaching adult men or holding office in the church? Explain.
 - C. What is your view of how church discipline should be exercised?
 - D. What areas of sinful behavior do you believe are inappropriate for church discipline?
 - E. Simply explain the principles you would follow with respect to determining how quickly to move in the area of church discipline.

- F. Briefly explain your understanding of the role of the regional or broader presbyteries in the church, and your submission/accountability to them as Presbyter.
- G. How do you understand the ordination vows of the CRPC?
5. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Please explain your position on the following matters pertaining to the sacraments:
- A. Who may administer the sacraments and under what circumstances?
 - B. What type of baptism do you believe is able to be received when prospective members are received into a church? (e.g. immersion, Roman Catholic, Mormon, etc.)
 - C. What requirements will you support with regards to prospective members who have young dependent children whom they do not wish to have baptized? Support your position.
 - D. Will you baptize children of non-members of your church?
 - E. What meaning is applied to baptism? (E.g. regeneration, sign and seal of covenant, sign of regeneration, other)?
 - F. How would you respond if a Baptist family came to your church and applied for membership, but did not wish to have their children baptized?
 - G. What view on the Lord's Table do you practice (Consubstantiation, transubstantiation, reformed/covenantal, purely symbolic) and why?
 - H. Who is permitted to commune and what requirements do they have?
 - I. Explain your view of guarding the table as you would practice it in the CRPC.
 - J. Paedocommunion.
 - K. Frequency of the Lord's Table observance.
 - L. What are the outward elements to be used in the Lord's Supper and Baptism?
6. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Please answer the following questions with regards to evangelism and church outreach:
- A. What is the Gospel and how is its preaching used to bring people to salvation?
 - B. What is your view on missions?
 - C. What is your view on how evangelism should be conducted?
 - D. What role does the average church member have in evangelism?
 - E. Explain your approach to church expansion and church growth.
 - F. What is your view of mega-churches?
 - G. What is your view of the home church movement (fathers being the pastors of their own home churches and other slight variations).
7. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> In what way do you differ from any of the doctrines which come from what is

known as the Five Points of Calvinism?

8. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Simply explain your position on “covenant”.
9. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> State your position on “millennialism”.
10. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> In your view what role do apologetics and philosophy have in understanding the Bible?
11. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Have you taken an apologetical view (classical, presuppositional, evidential, or some variation of them)? What is it and why? If not, why not?
12. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS [except for O & P]> Please state your understanding and thoughts with respect to the following:
 - A Arminianism
 - B Amyrauldianism (that while God does not save everyone, nevertheless Christ still died to make salvation possible for everyone.)
 - C The validity of the charismatic gifts and movement for today.
 - D Baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - E Dispensationalism
 - F The Kingdom of God
 - G The logical sequence of salvation (in what sequence do the following take place logically: faith, regeneration/new birth, making a decision for Christ, election, general call and effectual call)
 - H The Ten Commandments. (What place do they have in preaching the Gospel?)
 - I Common Grace
 - J Free will
 - K Free offer of the Gospel
 - L The Lordship Controversy
 - M The carnal Christian
 - N Perfectionism
 - O <ETHICS> Homosexual/Lesbian rights, marriage, membership in the church.
 - P <ETHICS> Abortion
 - Q Socialism
 - R Libertarianism
 - S Reconstruction theology

T Theonomy

U Your views on the following issues relating to the state:

- 1) The relationship between church and state.
- 2) The role of civil government in the economy.
- 3) The role of civil government in education.
- 4) What is your view on church corporations?
- 5) A Christian holding office in the state.

V The necessity of membership in a local church and why.

W The Great Commission

- 1) The Evangelical Mandate
- 2) The Cultural Mandate

13. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Please state your familiarity with, and position on, the doctrines associated with what has come to be known as the Auburn Avenue Theology.

14. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> State your views on the following matters pertaining to creation and science:

- A. What constitutes a “day” in the creation account.
- B. Six-day creation
- C. Framework hypothesis
- D. Day age
- E. Evolution of the species
- F. Adam having animal ancestors
- G. Geocentricity and heliocentricity
- H. Science and the Bible

15. <VIEW & KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE> Please state your understanding of the following:

- A. Redemptive Historical method
- B. Inspiration of Scripture
- C. Textual criticism
- D. Received Text (Textus Receptus)
- E. What version of the English Bible do you use and why?
- F. What versions of the original language texts do you use and why?

16. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> Please state your understanding of the following:
- A. Exclusive Psalmody
 - B. The use of biblically-based hymns in worship
 - C. Chanting
 - D. Use of musical instruments in worship
17. <PASTORAL THEOLOGY> How do you do exegesis and sermon preparation?
18. <PASTORAL THEOLOGY> What are your basic principles relating to liturgy”?
19. <DOCTRINE & CREEDS> What is your position on the Roman Catholic Church regarding the following:
- A. A true church?
 - B. The pope being the anti-Christ?
 - C. The Roman Church being anti-Christian.
 - D. Cooperation between evangelicals, Reformed and Roman Catholics.
 - E. Is their Gospel the true Gospel?

Appendix C

Fraternal Relations

The American Presbytery of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church hereby defines fraternal relations according to these guidelines. Unless otherwise specified or determined, fraternal relations with another ecclesiastical body entails the following:

1. Occasional pulpit exchange.
2. Intercommunion.
3. Consultation on matters of mutual interest.
4. Respect for each other's church discipline.
5. A comity arrangement by which each denomination pledges to consult with the other denomination before engaging in new mission works in an area where the other denomination has an existing congregation or mission work.
6. A frank exchange of each other's distinctive views, with the recognition of the reality of the unity of the visible church.
7. A goal of being able to present a united witness to a watching world.
8. Letters of greetings.
9. Apprising each other of the various actions undertaken, by means of sharing of minutes of meetings.
10. The exchange of fraternal delegates as opportunity presents itself.

(Approved at Presbytery November 2, 2005)

Appendix D

Credentials Form

CREREDENTIALS

from the

CHURCH

of

Phone Number: _____

We, the undersigned Elders of _____ Church do hereby authorize:

_____, _____ and _____

to serve as our church's delegates to the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church's Regional Presbytery meeting to assemble at _____ beginning on the _____ day of _____, A.D. 20 __, and ending on the _____ day of _____, A.D. 20 __

If it is necessary the following officers are empowered to serve as adjunct delegates:

_____, _____ and _____

Done in the Congregational Presbytery of the _____ Church assembled on this the _____ day of _____, A.D. 20 ____

Secretary

President

The Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church

Appendix E³⁷⁸

Guidelines for Exegesis Paper (Both OT & NT)

[The following is meant to provide a guideline for the basics of what is required]

1. Establish a “pericope”:
A pericope is the smallest unit for exegesis. You will be assigned a section for study and out of your study, and based on the literary structure of it, you must decide on a pericope for exegesis. Within that pericope (and out of your exegesis) you will also choose a text for sermon. The pericope may have one or more possible texts, but choose one.
2. Translation and word study:
Work on both of these independent of commentaries. You may use various lexicons and helps for parsing and meanings but stay away from even exegetical commentaries until later. Do a thorough word study; making note of tense, case, number (etc.), as well as variations of meanings and usage. For the NT describe the syntax (For example purpose clauses, result clauses, first, second, and third class condition clauses etc.). Make sure you describe how the participles are used (for example, means, manner, attending circumstance, etc.). For OT describe the verbals (stems: qal, hiphil etc., jussive, infinitives perfect, imperfect) and its syntactical usage (main verb, temporal, causal, purpose, result, etc.)
3. Context:
 - (a) Show a study of the literary context if any (sometimes context can be irrelevant, depending on the type of passage). As relevant the literary context includes the chapter, the book, the Bible. This study can be important in considering the theme/focus of the book and how it is shown in your eventual text and sermon.
 - (b) Show a brief study of the historical context and environment. This includes the situation of the readers (their time/history, culture, political situation, geography, and so on).
 - (c) Show a consideration of the redemptive-historical context. What stage in history is Christ present (promised, coming, arrived, leaving, etc.).
4. Value of component parts:
Make a note of any relatively small things that are mentioned in the pericope that may not have come up in the word study. There are often little “tidbits” which the Holy Spirit gave and they are significant. (For example: In 2Sam. 12 speaking of David’s sin, it is repeatedly mentioned that “king David” sinned.) Note the significance of these.
5. Establish and summarize the preaching text:
Already before, but especially by this stage, you should have a clear idea as to a text for a sermon. As you prayerfully think of the text you should give a summary of the main idea and truths that flow from it.
6. Consult Commentaries:

³⁷⁸ This appendix approved at 11-2013 and added at the 11-2014 American Presbytery. See minutes for details.

Here is the place to test your work. Don't use commentaries as a "prompt" but use them to find anything you may have missed or mistakes you may have made. Also here is the place to point out how "others" have made conclusions that are, in fact, not biblical (prove your point over against theirs).

[NOTE: Be wary of homiletical commentaries which will direct you towards ideas that do not come out of exegesis! Also remember, quality is better than quantity!]

7. Sermon Outline:

From your study you should have a very clear idea of a "theme" (a complete statement which, as much as possible, captures the teaching of the text). Out of your theme state "points" which come develop the theme.

[Following this faithfully will mean you will be able to preach "thus saith the Lord" in that text, and your study will "drive" you to the pulpit (versus the pulpit driving you to study).]

----- To God be the glory! ----