



## 2011 Council Agenda October 6, 2011

- I. Call to Order
- II. Prayer of Invocation
- III. Singing of Psalms – Led by Pastor Dave Hatcher
- IV. Introduction and Exhortation – Presiding Minister
- V. Roll Call
- VI. Consent Agenda
  - a. Technical amendment to Council Book of Procedures, Article XIII.  
**Article XIII is amended as follows:**  
**Insert the following language:**
    1. Upon the request of a member church in the CREC, the Minister of presbytery has the authority to register the ministerial credentials of a minister lawfully ordained.  
Holding a man's ministerial credentials does not mean that the man is a member of presbytery or council, or a delegate to presbytery or council. The list shall be reviewed and approved by Presbytery annually.  
Removing a man's credentials from such a register is not equivalent to defrocking, which can only be done in the CREC at the local church level.  
Renummer the following sections accordingly.

**Rationale:** This language was approved as part of the CREC Book of Procedures in 2005 and was in place when Council met in 2008. It was not rescinded by any act of Council, rather it was inadvertently left out of the rewrite of the BOP by the Minister of Council when he incorporated all the amendments to the BOP made by Council in 2008. It properly belongs to the language of Article XIII.

- b. Technical amendment to the form of the Apostles' Creed as found in the CREC Constitution, Article X.A.

**Article X.A. is amended as follows:**

**Insert a semicolon after “He rose again from the dead” and insert the pronoun “He” before the word “ascended.” The sentence will therefore read thus, “*On the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.*”**

**Rationale:** This adjustment of the form of the Apostles' Creed is intended only to clarify grammatically that the ascension of Jesus did not follow immediately upon his resurrection, since the Biblical text indicates there was a period of 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension (Acts 1:3). This revision is consistent with the “received form” of the text given by Philip Schaff in *The Creeds of Christendom*, Volume II.

- c. Amendment of Article III.B of the Constitution to clarify that CREC churches are allowed to use slightly different forms of the Creeds that make translation adjustments without altering the doctrinal meaning of the received text.

**Article III.B is amended to read (underlined text is existing language):**

**Each church will adopt into its statement of faith the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon in the form found in the Reformed Evangelical Confession below (1 Tim. 6:12).** A CREC local church may use forms of the creeds that differ from the forms found in the CREC Constitution, provided that the alternative forms 1) differ only in

being an alternative translation; and 2) the adopted form is approved at the Presbytery level at the stated meeting immediately following the decision by the local church to adopt an alternative form. Forms of the following creeds which have been modernized for spelling and usage are acceptable. Forms which have been altered with regard to doctrinal content are not.

*Rationale:* There are various forms of the creeds in print that have historically been used by churches from different traditions, some of which churches have or may become part of the CREC. In adopting the provisions of Articles III.B, VII.A and X.A-C, it was not the intention of the CREC to preclude the use of forms of the creeds that differ only in translation with respect to punctuation and construct, but that do not differ with respect to the doctrine contained in the creeds. Moreover, it is now recognized that the CREC is becoming increasingly international, so that the use of different forms translated into different languages must be acknowledged. This amendment clarifies the limits of liberty that member churches may exercise with respect to the form of the creeds used in the various churches.

- d. Technical amendment to address outdated citations:  
**Article II.F is amended to read (underlined text is existing language):**  
**F. Any candidate for pastor, minister, or teacher regardless of his level of formal education, will be examined before ordination (See Article ~~IX.C~~ IV.A.2.g.). The candidate will be examined by a local session of elders with regard to his manner of life, knowledge of Scripture, and doctrinal understanding. The presbytery will also examine him with regard to his manner of life, knowledge of Scripture, and doctrinal understanding. The presbytery may or may not recommend his ordination to the session of the local congregation. The local session is not judicially bound by the recommendation of presbytery. If a local session does not abide by the presbytery recommendation, then the presbytery may or may not initiate proceedings according to Article ~~IV.P~~ IV.D.5.**

**Rationale:** This technical amendment corrects residual citations from the 2005 approved documents that were incorrectly retained after incorporation of the 2008 revisions.

## VII. Old Business

### a. Committee Reports

#### i. Committee on Missions – Chairman Stoos

The Committee Report is appended to this agenda as **Appendix A.**

#### ii. Committee on Military Chaplains – Chairman Brainerd

The Committee Report is appended to this agenda as **Appendix B.**

#### iii. Committee on Ordination Procedures – Chairman Tuuri

The Committee Report is appended to this agenda as **Appendix C.**

### b. Second Reading of Confessions for inclusion in the Book of Confessions

#### i. Second Helvetic Confession (1566)

#### ii. 39 Articles of Christian Religion

## VIII. New Business

### a. Presiding Minister's Report

The Minister's Report is appended to this agenda as **Appendix D.**

Motion to ratify shall be entertained.

### b. Consideration of Motions and Overtures from Presbytery

#### i. Anselm

##### 1. Concerning ministerial lists.

**Insert a new paragraph 4(5) in Article XII of the CREC Book of Procedures as follows:**

***4. Upon receipt of a written request from the session of a CREC member church, the Minister shall add to the list of recognized ordained men a lawfully ordained minister who is a member of that local church, but who is not currently installed as an officer in that church. Such action by the Minister***

***shall be subject to ratification at the next stated meeting of the presbytery.***

***Rationale:*** Article IV of the CREC Council Book of Procedures describes a mechanism for presbytery to maintain a list of “formally recognized” ministers within the CREC.

Since all ministers in the CREC are required to be members of their local congregations unless granted a temporary dispensation by a unanimous vote of presbytery (Constitution, Article II.B), CREC presbyteries do not “hold” credentials in the same manner as other Presbyterian denominations. The list maintained by the minister of presbytery is, therefore, merely a means by which the credentials of ministers within the CREC can be made known to inquiring bodies inside or outside the CREC. In actuality, all ministerial credentials in the CREC are held by local Sessions, not by the broader assemblies.

The situation has arisen within at least one CREC member church in which the Session wishes to hold the credentials of one or more previously ordained ministers who are not presently “duly installed” as required under Article IV of the Book of Procedures. Under the current language of Article IV, the Minister of presbytery *may not* include the names of such men on his list of “recognized ordained ministers in the CREC.”

2. Concerning Memorial A.

**Eliminate the Memorial on incorporation from the Constitution of the CREC.**

***Rationale:*** Given the current makeup of the CREC and the civil law situation that she confronts, Anselm Presbytery does not believe Memorial A serves the best interests of the confederation. We are unconvinced that the text of the Memorial on Incorporation, including its internal justification, are truly reflective of the

Biblical teaching on the subject, specifically that filing incorporation papers with the State somehow diminishes or undermines the truth that the Church is a creation of Christ or that He is the “only rightful Head of the church.”

The Scriptures clearly state that the Church is incorporated by the work of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 12:13, 27). It does not necessarily follow, however, that, if the Church seeks recognition of its corporate status from the civil magistrate, it is thereby transferring allegiance to and according headship to the State. Such action is a mere legal technicality and has no bearing on the Church’s status as the Body of Christ. Rather, in many jurisdictions it is a necessary act for the Church to carry out its assigned mission under the Lord Jesus Christ. In many jurisdictions, a church is legally unable to own real property without corporate recognition by the State.

It seems to us unwise to officially proclaim as a confederation that an act sometimes necessary for the work of the Church should be avoided as a matter of policy and practice, unless the Scriptures give a clear word that it is essential to the obedience of the Church to her Head, Jesus Christ.

In addition, we would note that this is an issue that is peculiar to churches in the United States of America. Since the CREC is rapidly becoming an international body, it also seems unwise to include parochial and regional requirements in our constituting documents.

Anselm Presbytery notes that removal of Memorial A from the Constitution will in no way impinge on the decision of any local church’s session to remain unincorporated.

### 3. Concerning the minimum size of presbyteries.

**Article IV.A.1 of the Constitution is amended to read (underlined text is existing language):**

**There are two broader assemblies in the CREC: the Presbytery and the Church Council. A minimum of ~~two~~ three local churches is necessary to establish a presbytery (another term in common use is classis). Geographical boundaries of presbyteries may overlap, but in considering this, presbyteries are urged to remember the law of Christ (Matt. 7:12; 3 John 9).**

***Rationale:*** The CREC Constitution in its present form says in Article IV.A.1: “A minimum of two local churches is necessary to establish a presbytery.” The problem with the number “two” is that in section D.5 we read: “After a fair and open judicial hearing at presbytery, a congregation may be removed from membership in the presbytery by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.” But if there are only two churches in a presbytery, how can one of them be removed from a presbytery “by a two-thirds vote?” This would require at least three congregations in a presbytery: two of them voting for the removal of a third one. The same could be said about section C.5 of the same Article IV: “Before his term is completed, a minister may resign his position, or may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the assembly.” Here we read about “three-fourths vote” and one can imagine a situation when there are two churches in a presbytery and three of four delegates vote for the removing of a minister, but more probable is a situation where delegates from three other churches want unequivocally to remove the minister from his office. This leads to a conclusion that in certain critical situations a presbytery containing only two congregations becomes dysfunctional and

cannot fulfill its mission. Therefore a presbytery should contain at least three member churches.

4. Items arising from 2011 meeting

ii. Athanasius

1. Concerning the name of the CREC.

**The name, “Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches,” is changed to “Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches.”**

***Rationale:*** Churches in the southern states are encountering significant difficulties due to a common identification of the word “confederation” with the word “confederacy” in the popular culture.

2. Concerning Stated Meetings of Presbytery.

**Amend the first sentence of Article V.1 of the CREC Constitution to read (underlined text is existing language): The presbytery will have a at least one stated annual meeting.**

***Rationale:*** As it stands now, the CREC constitutional language on stated meetings can be interpreted to limit a presbytery to conducting *only* one stated meeting per year. If so interpreted, this places an undo burden or limitation upon the Presbyteries for the conducting of their business as they deem fit.

3. Request for discussion of the question: *Is it permissible (or wise) for CREC churches from one Presbytery to sponsor a church within the geographical confines of another Presbytery?*

4. Items arising from 2011 meeting

iii. Augustine

1. Concerning qualification of churches for full membership in the CREC.

**Amend the CREC Book of Procedures, Article IV.3.c.iii to read (underlined text is existing language): The mission church**



**shall have at least ~~two~~ three member pastors/elders, not including pastors/elders of the mother church who have been assigned to serve *pro tempore* on the mission church's session.**

***Rationale:*** The CREC, having a Presbyterian form of government at the local level, requires rule by a plurality of elders. We have always considered two elders as meeting that requirement. However, there have been several instances in various presbyteries where having just two elders created considerable trouble. When two elders are in stark disagreement with one another and they are the only two elders on the session, there is much more potential for some sort of split in the church. It is hoped that a third elder on the session would alleviate some of this trouble. At the very least, if one of three elders resigns or leaves a church, it is not nearly as damaging as having one of two founding elders leave a church.

Also, CREC practice in the past has been for an elder *pro-tempore* from another church or from a mother church, to be counted in the plurality of elders. Although it may be wise to have an elder from a more mature church serve on a session, we do not think this is a healthy situation or an adequate solution for the requirement of a plurality of elders. It is any local church's prerogative to maintain elders *pro tempore* but this should not qualify them as having adequate leadership in their local church.

2. Concerning notification of Presiding Ministers.  
**Insert a new Article IX into the CREC Book of Procedures, to read:**
  1. **The session of elders of each church shall seek the counsel of the Minister of Presbytery under the following circumstances:**

- a. **Before formally admonishing a minister or elder (formal admonishment consists of an act of the session, entered in the minutes and delivered to the minister or elder verbally or in writing).**
- b. **Before dismissing a Pastor or elder or calling for his resignation.**
- c. **Before excommunicating any member of the church.**
- d. **If there is reason to believe that a crisis is developing in the church.**

**2. Ministers of Presbytery shall report to the Minister of Council the same information. Renumber all following Articles accordingly.**

***Rationale:*** We are a confederation of churches and call upon one another in the broader church to help us minister within our local churches. Although there is protection from making unwise decisions in a local session of elders, the particular blind spots of operating as a local church apart from the broader church, still remain. It is our contention that early involvement of a Minister of Presbytery or Council in the situations outlined above will go a long way to prevent tumultuous discords within our churches. The Ministers are the embodiment of Presbytery in between meetings. It is our hope that their involvement in seeking peace in the churches would be a great benefit to the local churches. The actions of Ministers do not become the permanent actions of Presbytery until the Ministers report on the actions and have them approved by the Presbyteries. Thus, there is no fear that the Ministers of Presbytery or Council can act beyond their constitutional authority beyond one year at the most, as Ministers must report their actions annually to have them either approved or disapproved. A concern that some

elected minister might act over and above his authority should not keep us from using our ministers now to help keep peace in our churches. A failure to do so will cause our churches to continue to act, for all practical purposes, as independent churches.

3. Concerning Ministers of Presbytery and Council. **Amend the first sentence of Article IV.C.9.a of the CREC Constitution to read (underlined text is existing language): First, between meetings of the broader assembly, the minister ~~represents~~ is recognized as the embodiment of the broader assembly and acts by initiating and taking prudent steps in furtherance of an action, which he must report to the broader assembly for ratification.**

*Rationale:* (see rationale for previous motion)

4. Items arising from 2011 meeting

- iv. Calvin

1. Items arising from 2011 meeting

- v. Knox

1. Items arising from 2011 meeting

- vi. Tyndale

1. Concerning pastor compensation.

**Insert two new paragraphs into Article XI.1 of the CREC Book of Procedures, to read:**  
**e. ordination exam committees shall inquire of local elder boards (session, consistories) as to the adequacy of the teaching elder candidates' compensation package (salary, housing, insurance, etc.);**  
**f. presbyteries shall regularly remind local churches of their duties to teaching elders in matters of compensation.**

*Rationale:*

1. Scripture states that “those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel,” “one who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches,” and “the laborer deserves his wages.”
2. The current BOP makes no statement as to the necessity of local churches to support their pastors/teaching elders (Art. XI, XII).
3. It has historically been the responsibility of broader, regional assemblies to provide guidance and oversight to local churches on both the reception (“guard the flock”; Acts 20) and care of ministers/teaching elders.
4. It is usually awkward for a local pastor to exhort his congregation and elders as to their duties to him in terms of financial compensation, since it often appears self-serving.

2. Items arising from 2011 meeting

vii. Wycliffe

1. Concerning a confidentiality statement.

**Insert into the CREC Book of Procedures at an appropriate place determined by the Minister of Council, the Confidentiality Policy attached to this agenda as Appendix E.**

2. Items arising from 2011 meeting

c. Proposal from Minister of Council

- i. Resolution of duplicate language in Constitution Article V.4. and Book of Procedures Article V.1 regarding votes at meetings of broader assemblies.  
**Delete Article V of the CREC Book of Procedures and amend Article V.4 of the CREC Constitution to read (underlined text is existing language):**

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

***Rationale:*** Since the nearly identical language is in the Constitution, Article V of the Book of Procedures is redundant, unnecessary and potentially confusing. The current grammatical usage of the BOP is inserted into the Constitution to correct a problem of agreement.

- d. Reconciliation of Books of Procedure (Constitution, Article IV.A.6)
- IX. Election of Presiding Minister for 2011-14  
No nominations have been received as of September 5, 2011. A motion is pending in at least one presbytery to address this matter.
- X. Election of Presiding Minister *pro tempore* for 2011-14
- XI. Date and location for 2014 Triennial Meeting of Council.
- XII. Good of the Order
- XIII. Closing Prayer
- XIV. Adjournment