

2014 Council Minutes

October 8, 2014

I. Call to Order

Presiding Minister of Council Jack Phelps (hereafter PMC Phelps) called the meeting to order: 9:10am

II. Prayer of Invocation

Given by Pastor Nate Harlan of Trinity Evangelical Church in Larwill, Indiana.

III. Singing of Psalms – Led by Pastor Dave Hatcher

IV. Introduction and Exhortation – Presiding Minister

Given by PMC Phelps on Romans Ch. 12

V. Roll Call

Anselm - Rev. Garry Vanderveen
Anselm – Rev. Dennis Tuuri
Athanasius – Rev. Rich Lusk
Athanasius – Rev. Uri Brito
Augustine – Rev. Steve Hemmeke
Augustine – Rev. Gregg Strawbridge
Calvin – Rev. Garrett Craw
Calvin – Rev. Jason Farley
Knox – Rev. Terrance Tollefson
Knox – Rev. Stuart Bryan
Tyndale – Rev. Eric Sauder
Tyndale – Rev. Nate Harlan
Wycliffe – Rev. Jeff Niell
Wycliffe – Rev. Randy Booth
Presiding Minister – Rev. Jack Phelps
Assistant Presiding Minister – Rev. Douglas Wilson

VI. Consent Agenda

(14:10:8:1)

Pastor Hemmeke moved that the Consent Agenda be approved with item a. removed; Pastor Craw seconded; **Motion Passed unanimously**

- b. Technical amendment to the CREC Constitution, Article X
The CREC Constitution, Article X is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

Article X. The Ecumenical Creeds

A. The Apostles' Creed (2nd century)

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hades. On the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

B. Nicene Creed; Constantinople (381 AD)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin, Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church; acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

C. Definition of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanity; truly God and truly man, with a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father according to His deity, and consubstantial with us according to the humanity; like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before the ages He was begotten of the Father, according to the deity, and in these last days, for us and for our salvation, He was born of Mary the virgin, who is Godbearer according to His humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, to be acknowledge in two natures; without confusing them, without interchanging them, without dividing them, and without separating them; the distinction of natures by no means taken away by the union, but the properties of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one subsistence; not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as from the beginning the prophets have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.

A new Article XI is enacted, to read as follows:

THE REFORMED EVANGELICAL CONFESSION

(1) A Westminster Creed (A modern selection from the 17th century Shorter Catechism)

I believe man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever; I believe God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth;

I believe there is but one true and living God; that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;

I believe God has foreordained whatever comes to pass; that God made all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good; and that God preserves and governs all His creatures and all their actions.

I believe our first parents, though created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, sinned against God, by eating the forbidden fruit; and that their fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery;

I believe God determined, out of His mere good pleasure, to deliver His elect out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer;

I believe the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever;

I believe Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

I believe Christ as our Redeemer underwent the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the cursed death of the cross, and burial; He rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended up into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father, and is coming to judge the world at the last day.

I believe we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit; I believe God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life to escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin;

I believe by His free grace we are effectually called, justified, and sanctified, and gathered into the visible church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation;

I believe that we also are given in this life such accompanying benefits as assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end; that at death, we are made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory; and our bodies, being still united in Christ, rest in their graves, till the resurrection; and at the resurrection, we shall be raised up in glory, we shall openly be acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

(2) An Evangelical Statement (Adapted from the National Association of Evangelicals)

We believe the Bible to be the only inerrant Word of God. It is our only ultimate and infallible authority for faith and practice. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful. He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all Creation but not limited by it. He is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from His sight. In all things He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character.

We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous, good, severe, loving and full of mercy. He created the heavens and earth, and everything in them, in the space of six ordinary days, and all very good. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of everything that has been made.

We believe in the true deity and full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe in the full deity of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him together with the Father and the Son in the works of creation and redemption.

We believe that because of Adam's sin all mankind is in rebellion against God. For the salvation of such lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, and that faith without works is dead.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation. We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rationale:

This amendment clarifies current confusion in the CREC Constitution. The confusion has two parts:

1. As it now reads, the Reformed Evangelical Confession is included together with the Three Ecumenical Creeds in Article X. But these two are quite different creatures and serve entirely different functions in the CREC's Constitution. Agreement to the three Creeds is required of all churches in the CREC, according to Article III.B. They are, in fact, the basis of doctrinal unity in our Communion because we believe they form the *sin qua non* for the Christian faith. The Reformed Evangelical Confession, on the other hand, is but one of several Confessional statements that are allowable to enable a church to become part of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, under Article III.C. All of the other Confessions listed in Article III.C are published elsewhere in acceptable form, whereas the Reformed Evangelical Confession, if it is to be adopted as the basic confessional position of a CREC church must be adopted in the form shown in the Constitution. It is therefore necessary for it to be included verbatim in the Constitution. However, it is inappropriate for it to appear in the

same section with the Ecumenical Creeds, which appearance seems to accord it the same status as they enjoy. That was never the intention of the CREC.

2. The current format of the Reformed Evangelical Confession does not make clear that the two parts are one whole. When the Reformed Evangelical Confession was included in the original CRE Constitution, it was understood that both parts were required, but this is not clear in the configuration appearing in Article X. The amendment makes the clarification by giving the whole a single title and dividing it into two sub-parts.

c. Technical amendment to the CREC Constitution, Article IV.
The CREC Constitution, Article IV.A.6-8, is repealed and reenacted to read:

6. Books of Procedures

a. The broader assemblies shall keep a Book of Procedures that details particular methods for carrying out the various constitutionally-sanctioned tasks of an assembly. The broader assemblies are informed by the Book of Procedures, but not bound to it. Should an assembly act in exception to the Book of Procedures, the exception must be acknowledged and explained in the minutes. The Book of Procedures may be altered or amended at any time by a simple majority of an assembly. The various presbyteries may modify their respective Books of Procedures between meetings of council. Each meeting of council will review these various modifications and harmonize the various Books of Procedures, in accordance with the provisions of the CREC Council Book of Procedures. Presbyteries may then approve further modifications for their own use, to be followed in turn by conciliar review. Maintenance and publication of a current Book of Procedures is the responsibility of the minister.

b. The Book of Procedures maintained by each Presbytery will utilize a standardized format, based upon the CREC Council Book of Procedures, with local practice set out separately by Article. The portion of the Presbytery Books of Procedure that is based upon the CREC Council Book of Procedures will be updated in conformity with the Council Book of Procedures as it is updated.

c. Each Presbytery Minister will ensure that the numbering of the Book of Procedures he is responsible for

maintaining is consistent with the Council Book of Procedures, which will require the renumbering of Articles which appear only on a local basis.

A new Article IV.A.7 is enacted to read:

7. Assemblies may from time to time address issues not included in the historic creeds and confessions by means of overtures, memorials (see Article IX), or confessional statements.

Article IV.D.6 is repealed.

Rationale:

This amendment makes no change to the current language of the Constitution. It simply reorganizes the material currently found in Article IV.A.6-8 under a single heading, and moves the current language of Article IV.D.6 into Article IV.A where it properly belongs.

d. **Technical amendment to the CREC Constitution and Book of Procedures**

All references to the Minister of Presbytery or Minister of Council are changed to read “Presiding Minister” of each respective body.

Rationale:

When the documents were amended to rename the position of “Moderator” of broader assemblies to “Minister” of broader assemblies there was no effort to distinguish the Minister of an assembly from the use of the same word to describe the office of Minister within each local church that uses this terminology. Subsequent to the Council Meeting in 2008, it was agreed informally to refer to the Minister of Council and the Ministers of Presbytery as “Presiding Ministers.” This has now become common practice in the CREC and has served the confederation well. This technical amendment would codify current practice by including it in the governing documents.

VII. Committee Reports

(14/10/8:2) Pastor Strawbridge moved to adopt committee report a; Pastor Hemmeke seconded and explained the rationale; discussion;

-Pastor Craw offered a friendly amendment suggesting that in section 5 of appendix b, “they” be changed to “the congregation”; amendment approved.

-Pastor Booth offered a friendly amendment suggesting that in section 3b of appendix b be changed from “an inherent” to “a”; amendment approved.

-Pastor Booth offered a friendly amendment suggesting that in section 4a of appendix b “individual” be inserted immediately between CREC and member in line 2; amendment approved.

-Pastor Niell noted that in section 4b line 2 “Subsection 2” should be changed to “Subsection 3”; change approved.

-Pastor Tuuri moved to strike “to be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be from the same household.”; Pastor Farley seconded; discussion, Pastor Hemmeke offered a friendly amendment suggesting that the language be “to be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be husband and wife”; amendment approved; **Motion passed passed 13:1**

Motion to adopt committee report with amendments, passed unanimously.

- a. Committee on Constitutional revision of Article IV.D.
In February, 2013, a Committee of Council was appointed to draft a proposed amendment to the Constitution regarding how appeals and complaints are to be handled in the CREC. Committee members were Pastors Strawbridge, Hemmeke and Burrow. The report of the committee is attached to this agenda as **Appendix B**.

A motion to adopt is made by the committee.

Note: In 2013, Augustine Presbytery forwarded a similar amendment and requested that Council adopt “the substance” of it in 2014. The Council Committee report addresses “the substance” of the Augustine proposal.

- b. Appeals Court I
In January, 2012, a Council Court of Appeals was established to hear an appeal arising from within Augustine Presbytery. Members of the Court were Pastors Shade, Tuuri, Craw, Stoos and Sorey. The Court’s ruling was issued on January 5, 2013. A copy is attached as **Appendix C**. Ratification is deferred to Agenda Item VIII a., Presiding Minister’s Report.

- c. Appeals Court II

In July, 2013, a Council Court of Appeals was established to hear an appeal arising from within Augustine Presbytery. Members of the Court were Pastors Hemmeke, Niell, Wilson, Burrow and Sorey. The Court's ruling was issued on April 28, 2014. A copy is attached as **Appendix D**.

Ratification is deferred to Agenda Item VIII a., Presiding Minister's Report.

d. Committee for the 2014 Missions Conference

Acting in response to direction given by Council in 2011, a committee was established to plan a Missions Conference at the 2014 Triennial Meeting. The committee consisted of Pastors Stoos and Craw, with participation by Pastor Phelps. It was decided to begin the Triennial Meeting with a "Missions Evening" including a speaker and a reception atmosphere where various CREC supported missions could present their work. Csaba Leidenfrost was asked to coordinate.

e. Committee on a Confidentiality Policy

At Council in 2011, a committee was appointed to review the proposed Confidentiality Policy in light of the discussion held at Council. Members appointed by Act of Council were Pastors Burrow, Tuuri and Booth. Minister Phelps asked Pastor Booth to serve as Chairman. No action has been taken by the committee.

VIII. New Business

a. Presiding Minister's Report

The Minister's Report is attached as **Appendix A**.

A motion to ratify in whole or in part shall be entertained.

-PMC Phelps asked to waive the reading.

(14/10/8:3) Pastor Bryan moved to deny all logo proposals in section 4b; Pastor Brito seconded; **Motion passed unanimously**

(14/10/8:4) Pastor Strawbridge moved that in lieu of having one person or group develop a logo, churches and or presbyteries be permitted to suggest logos by 2017; Pastor Craw seconded; Discussion; a friendly amendment was offered to change the date to 2015; amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:5) Pastor Strawbridge moved to ratify section 4c; Pastor Bryan seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:6) Pastor Niell moved to ratify section 4e; Pastor Tollefson seconded;
Motion passed unanimously.

Pastor Hemmeke reminded PMC Phelps to ask the body to commend Pastor Stoos and Christ the King, Sacramento for their great work at council.

(14/10/8:7) Pastor Bryan moved to ratify the appointment in section 4f; Pastor Sauder seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:8) Pastor Farley moved to ratify the decision of the court in section 4f; Pastor Hemmeke seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:9) Pastor Tollefson moved to ratify the appointment in section 4g; Pastor Strawbridge seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:10) Pastor Bryan moved to ratify the decision in section 4g; Pastor Farley seconded; discussion; An objection was raised, Pastor Hemmeke offered explanation, **Motion Passed on vote 13, 1.**

Pastor Strawbridge noted one correction to section 3g that he did not accompany PMC Phelps to Ukraine in 2013

b. Consideration of Motions and Overtures from Presbytery
i. Anselm

(14/10/8:11) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII.b.i.1; Pastor Bryan Seconded; discussion; **Motion passed unanimously**

1. Concerning Memorial A “Ordination Exams”
Motion: Memorial A is repealed. Subsequent Memorials are renumbered accordingly.

Rationale:

The need for this memorial has been obviated by the amendments to the Book of Procedures enacted by Council in 2011. The relation between the work of presbytery and the local church is clearly spelled out in the BOP.

(14/10/8:12) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b. i. 2; Pastor Farley Seconded; Discussion; a friendly amendment was offered to replace “is repealed and reenacted” with “is amended to read”; amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Concerning Memorial B “Ministerial Training”
Motion: Memorial B “is amended to read:”
Memorial (B) “Ministerial Training”

We believe that ministerial training is best conducted under the oversight of a local session, and should include an intense apprenticeship in a local body to test and develop the gifts, skills, knowledge, and spiritual qualifications of the candidate. At the same time, it is very difficult for many local congregations, with limited resources, to provide a candidate with a form of theological training that upholds high academic standards, equips the candidate in original languages, and so forth. Thus, we see a place for churches to send men to seminaries, while still overseeing and facilitating their training in other ways. In an ideal scenario, seminaries would function as educational extensions of the Church, and seminary learning would be integrated into a comprehensive program of ministerial apprenticeship.

Rationale:

This rewrite incorporates the existing position of the current memorial regarding the CREC's perspective that ministerial training should be primarily under the oversight of local churches. But it attempts to also address the present situation regarding the relative incapacity of many local churches to provide a full range of educational opportunities for ministerial students to study original languages and other key parts of a ministerial education.

(14/10/8:13) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b. i. 3; Pastor Niell seconded; a friendly amendment was offered to change “repealed and reenacted” with “is amended to read”, amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Concerning Memorial D “Christian Education”
Motion: Memorial D is **amended to read** as follows (**bold text** in the body of the amendment indicates key changes and will not be typeset this way in the final form, if adopted):

Memorial (D) Christian Education

All things are to be considered and conducted under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, including education, and especially the education of our covenant children. God has **not** charged the state to educate

children **but** has **explicitly** commanded parents to bring up their children in the education and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4, Deut. 6:7). Given the importance and enormity of the task (Ps. 127:3-5, Deut. 6:7-9), and the impossibility of neutrality in education (Prov. 1:7, Matt. 12:30, Luke 6:40, Col. 2:1-10, 2 Cor. 10:3-5), we do heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor.

Government schools **tend to be**, by decree and design, explicitly godless, and therefore **normally should not** be considered a legitimate means of inculcating true faith, holy living and a decidedly Christian worldview in the children of Christian parents. **Therefore, we strongly encourage Christian parents to seek alternative ways of educating their children, whether by means of Christian schools or homeschooling. In cases, where Christian education is an impossibility, parents must be active and diligent in overseeing the education of their children.**

Parents who do not fully understand the indispensability of Christian education should be warmly received into membership. However, the leaders of Christ's church must thoroughly understand and plainly teach the divine imperative to disciple our children, the divine prohibition of rendering unto Caesar those who bear God's image (Matt. 22:20-21), the divine warning to those who cause their little ones to stumble (Matt. 18:6) and the divine promises to those who raise their children in faith (Deut. 7:9, Ps.102:5-7, Ps. 103:17-18, Prov. 22:6, Luke 1:48-50, Acts 2:39).

(14/10/8:14) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b.i.4; Pastor Hemmeke Seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Concerning Memorial E "Creation"

Motion: Paragraph 2 of Memorial E is repealed and reenacted to read:

Science is a legitimate and noble pursuit, as an aspect of the creation mandate (Gen. 1:26-28), and Christians should not be fearful or ungrateful for advances in scientific knowledge and technology. Indeed, the best scientific developments have been the fruit of an essentially Christian worldview. Advances in medicine, transportation, communication, computers, etc. are God's good gifts. We therefore encourage the cultivation of the scientific enterprise on the basis of fully biblical principles. Science and the gospel are not inherently antagonistic.

(14/10/8:15) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b.i. 5; Pastor Sauder Seconded; discussion; Pastor Niell offered a friendly amendment to capitalize and italicize "communion, reformed, and evangelical"; amendment approved; **Motion Passed unanimously.**

5. Concerning the CREC Constitution.

Motion: The Preamble of the CREC Constitution is amended as follows:

The name of this confederation of churches is the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches [CREC]. We use the word *Communion* in its common sense of being participants in one particular body gathered within the broader body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. ~~By reformed, we call to mind the need to restore the church from many contemporary abuses, as well as testify that we stand in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy. As evangelicals, we desire to confess the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in both love and doctrinal integrity. By~~ ***Reformed*, we testify that we stand in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy and call to mind the importance of continual reformation and sanctification for the Church of Jesus Christ in light of Holy**

Scripture, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. By *Evangelical*, we confess that the Gospel of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation and the Church's calling is to proclaim it with love and doctrinal integrity. The nature of our affiliation is one of confederation, that is, we have formed a broad connection between churches which, with respect to polity, is representative, being neither hierarchical nor autonomous. Our gathering of churches is not intended as a separation from other orthodox believers who confess the name of Christ, but rather as a gathering within that broader church, in order to work together effectively for reformation.

(14/10/8:16) Pastor Bryan moved that Council make clear that in changing these definitions we are not changing anything of substance but merely offering a clarification of terms; Pastor Farley seconded; **Motion carried unanimously.**

(14/10/8:17) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b. 1. 6 in the CREC Constitution; Pastor Booth seconded; discussion; **Motion Passed 10 to 4.**

(14/10/8:18) Pastor Vanderveen moved to adopt VIII. b. 1.6 in the CREC BOP; Pastor Booth seconded; discussion; Pastor Booth offered a friendly amendment to drop “the” in section 3.c line 4; Amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

6. Concerning CREC Constitution Article III.E and BOP Article III.3.

Motion: Article III.E of the CREC Constitution is amended and BOP Article III.3 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

Constitution Article III.E

1. Elders of CREC member churches must declare their honest subscription to **the doctrine in the confessions adopted by their church (excluding declared amendments or exceptions). Subscription to the confessions does not mean that the confessions necessarily formulate the doctrine in the**

best manner, or that they are exhaustive statements of the doctrines confessed, or that they address every teaching of Scripture or condemn every error. Furthermore, subscription does not mean that churches are bound to the Scripture references and allusions, incidental remarks or the theological deductions which some may draw from the doctrines set forth in the confessions. Rather, subscription simply means that the doctrines in the confessions are to be embraced because they are derived from the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, CREC churches are expected to reject all doctrines or opinions that are contrary to or inconsistent with the confessions (excluding declared amendments or exceptions).

2. A candidate church must declare any exceptions to its confessional standards prior to becoming a CREC member (Ex. 20:16; Col. 3:9). If a member church modifies its confessional standards in any way, including amendments and exceptions, the church must notify presbytery immediately. If presbytery determines that the modification places the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings according to **Article IV.D.5.ConformAmmed**

BPO Article III.3

3. When admitting a new church into membership in the CREC, the Minister shall ask the following questions of the church's delegation:

a. Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in the sight of God and before Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of faith, to take hold on eternal life, to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses?

b. Do you, with all the officers of your church, wholeheartedly and willingly acknowledge before God that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

c. Do you, with all the officers of your church, sincerely receive, adopt and believe the Doctrinal Standards of your church (apart from declared exceptions), as a faithful interpretation of the teaching of the Word of God?

d. Do you, with all the officers of your church, pay careful attention to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood?

e. Do you, with all the officers of your church, commit yourselves in faithfulness to the churches in this Communion: to keep with them the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to pray for them, to comfort them, to encourage them, to admonish them, and to rule with them in accordance with the Constitution of this Communion and in full submission to the Word of God?

7. Item not offered.

8. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting. None.

ii. Athanasius Presbytery

1. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting. None.

iii. Augustine Presbytery

(14/10/8:19) Pastor Strawbridge moved to adopt VIII b. iii. 1; Pastor Sauder Seconded; discussion; **Motion failed unanimously**

1. Concerning Book of Procedures Article X.3.
Motion: BOP Article X.3 shall be amended as follows:

Appellant(s) will ~~notify both the Respondent and the Minister of the appropriate judicatory of his intent to appeal~~ give notice of intent to appeal, whether an initial appeal and / or after an appellate decision, to both the Presiding Minister of the next broader judicatory and the respondent(s) within four weeks of the ~~decision he is appealing~~ action from which appeal is made.

Additionally, the appeal in full must be submitted to the next broader judicatory within sixty days of the action from which appeal is made. If the appeal is forwarded by the Presiding Minister for action, he shall constitute a Court of Appeals within two weeks of the appeal being fully submitted by the appellant(s), and will seek to ensure that the judgment of the court is promulgated within four months of being constituted. The goal is to render a judgment in the matter of the appeal within six months of the action being appealed, to which all parties are to adhere. The Presiding Minister may grant additional time in the process only in extraordinary circumstances and will keep all parties informed.

2. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting. None.

(14/10/8:20) Pastor Strawbridge moved for Council to appoint a Missions Recommendation Commission consisting of one member from each presbytery to accomplish the following:

- 1) Create a set of guidelines or principles whereby to recognize CREC Council ~~approved~~ recommended missions endeavors by May 1, 2015. Note: this is not to prohibit local congregations from other efforts: this would merely provide a basis for recommendations to presbyteries and congregations.
- 2) Review the missions efforts across the CREC and other opportunities that meet CREC Council approved criteria (i.e. as in point 1).

3) Provide recommendations to the 2015-2017 presbyteries of CREC recommended mission opportunities and suggested goals of engagement for the various presbyteries through the churches of each presbytery.

4) Report on the commission's work to 2017 Council along with recommendations to the council to continue to further missions in the CREC.

NOTE: This is a commission and therefore will act ~~with the authority of Council, without the need of awaiting another council to approve its recommendations~~ without the need to wait for the 2017 Council.

Pastor Tollefson seconded; discussion; Pastor Booth suggested a friendly amendment to change "approved" in section 1 to "recommended" and to strike "with the authority of Council, without the need to wait for another council to approve its recommendations" in the last sentence and insert "without the need to wait for the 2017 council." amendment approved;
Motion passed 13:1

PMC Phelps called for lunch recess at 11:50 am
Meeting Reconvened 1:00 pm

(14/10/8:21) Pastor Strawbridge moved that the next Presiding Minister of Council appoint the Missions Recommendation Commission; Pastor Tollefson seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

iv. Calvin Presbytery

1. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting. None.

v. Knox Presbytery

(14/10/8:22) Pastor Bryan moved to adopt VIII. b.v.1; Pastor Booth seconded;

Discussion; PMC Phelps invited Pastor Kenton Spratt of Christ Church Spokane, in Spokane, Washington to speak to the issue. Pastor Booth offered a friendly amendment to change "authority" in line 1 and 3 of section 5 to "oversight"; amendment approved; **Motion passed 12:2**

1. (Pending referral) Concerning Book of Procedures Article XII.

Motion: BOP Article XII, Recognition of Ordained Ministers, is repealed and reenacted. The text of the proposal is attached as **Appendix E.**

2. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting. None.

vi. Tyndale Presbytery
1. Item not offered.

2. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting.

(14/10/8:23) Pastor Sauder moved that “Council remove confidential material from public access to ensure that confidential matters are discussed in a secure fashion in the appropriate manner.”; Pastor Hemmeke seconded; discussion; Pastor Booth offered a friendly amendment that the PM of Council place this motion in the appropriate CREC documents and location. Amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:24) Pastor Sauder moved that “Council form a committee to study the issue of appropriate policies and guidelines regarding child protection in our churches, including child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, and abortion.”; Pastor Lusk seconded; discussion; a friendly amendment was offered to have the next Presiding Minister of Council appoint this committee; Amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously.**

vii. Wycliffe Presbytery

(14/10/8:25) Pastor Niell moved to adopt VIII. b. vii. 1; Pastor Craw seconded; Discussion; PMC Phelps invited Gabe Wetmore to speak to the issue; **Motion failed unanimously.**

1. Concerning Constitution Article IV.C.9.

Motion: Insert a new paragraph d) under subsection 9 to read as follows:

Fourth, Ministers shall be careful to distinguish their personal opinions from the voice of the assembly which they serve. A Minister must not speak, in his official capacity, to doctrinal matters beyond what the broader assembly has already declared. The Minister may speak doctrinally about those creedal statements which this constitution requires all member churches to subscribe to. The Minister may also speak doctrinally about memorials adopted by Council, or matters on which the higher assembly has made an official statement. The Minister may refer to various ways in which approved confessions address certain

issues, but he has no authority to interpret the confessional standards on behalf of the assembly. Due to the fact that member churches are allowed to subscribe to various confessional standards, the Minister shall refrain from prejudicing one confessional standard above another in his representation of the broader assembly. Beyond these, the Minister shall be careful in distinguishing those opinions which he may personally hold from the opinion of the assembly which he serves.

Renumber the following section and reword the first sentence accordingly.

Rationale:

The doctrinal positions of our communion should be established through careful deliberation by a multitude of men. A Presiding Minister serves many purposes in the church, but setting the doctrinal positions, or officially interpreting the confessional standards of the church, should not be one of them. This needs to be clarified in our Constitution. While our Constitution currently recognizes the importance of careful deliberation in establishing doctrinal positions, it does not sufficiently clarify the role of the Presiding Minister in this matter. For example, in Article IX on Memorials, paragraph C states:

The process for adopting a memorial must involve a careful striving for like-mindedness. This deliberate process will help us guard against various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). Any new memorial must be approved as a draft at a stated Council and adopted at a subsequent stated Council.

There is wisdom in this. These things shouldn't be done on the spur of the moment, and they should not be allowed to be done by one man. However, in our current polity, there is nothing to direct the Presiding Minister (PM) how he may or may not speak on behalf of the broader assembly which he serves. For example, the way it now stands, a PM of Council could theoretically make a public statement about our communion's position on a given topic (a topic that, for example, was not addressed by our various confessions, or a topic that was not uniformly addressed by our various confessions). Currently, if the Council wanted to create a memorial on a new topic, it could take over three years, and

would involve the deliberation of two separate stated sessions of Council. Yet, there is currently nothing stopping a Presiding Minister from making a public statement on the exact same matter and representing it as the official position of the communion. It could even be argued that in such a scenario, if the PM included this statement in his report to Council, and Council ratified his report, that the PM's statement about the official views of the communion would be ratified as such, just as much as if they were deliberated on the floor of Council and passed by a vote of council. This is why we feel that this issue needs to be clarified in our constitution. In the paragraph on memorials, that was cited above, the process for adopting positions is slow, and demands the consideration of at least two separate Council sessions. Yet, we currently have an inconsistency, because, theoretically the PM can, by himself, seek to judge the mind of council and make official statements on behalf of the entire communion. Furthermore, in theory, those opinions could become codified as the official position of the communion in a way that by-passes the deliberate and "careful striving for like-mindedness" required by the approach of constitutional paragraph IX.C.

This proposed constitutional revision, seeks to make the authority of the PM clear in these matters. If passed, a PM would still be able to express his personal opinion in various matters. He could even say that he thought that the communion would agree with him, but he couldn't speak officially as the voice of the communion and, by himself, make a statement about the official position of the CREC, unless the communion had indeed already spoken on the issue. In the current situation the PM actually has more authority than the Council itself (in light of the restrictions of IX.C).

PMC Phelps called a short recess 2:06pm
Meeting reconvened 2:20 pm

(14/10/8:26) Pastor Niell moved to adopt VIII. b. vii. 2; Pastor Craw seconded;
Discussion; **Motion failed 8:6**

2. Concerning Constitution Article IV.C.9.a

Motion: Insert new language in paragraph **a**), as follows (indicated in bold type):

First, between meetings of the broader assembly, the Minister represents the broader assembly by initiating and taking prudent steps in furtherance of an action, which he must report to the broader

assembly for ratification. In this way, the Minister represents the broader assembly for any action empowered to that assembly by this constitution, except for the following: admitting members; amending confessional or governmental standards; **entering into, or initiating the process of, an official relationship with, or membership in, another church, association, organization, or any other entity whatsoever, unless specifically commissioned by the broader assembly which he serves;** making formal recommendations (whether for or against) ministerial candidates for ordination; removing a member church; requiring arbitration; and adjudicating a trial.

Rationale:

We do not believe that any one person should have the power to bring the denomination into an official relationship with any other entity. Whether it would be applying for, or approval of a request, for fraternal relations with a particular church, applying for membership in an association of churches, or becoming part of a particular para-church organization. We believe that any relationship that our denomination enters into, ought to be something that should be decided by the Spirit working through a multitude of men, in the gathered assemblies of the church. We have included not only the official ratification of such relationships, but also “initiating the process of” such relationships. We feel this is important, because in many cases, once a request is made the church or organization must respond, and there is unavoidable potential for damage and entanglement. The Presiding Minister could suggest that the assembly which he serves enter into such a relationship, but he ought not to have power to unilaterally initiate it.

3. Items arising from 2014 stated meeting.

(14/10/8:27) Pastor Booth moved that the next Presiding Minister of Council appoint a committee to explore friendly relations with other denominations and entities; Pastor Vanderveen seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

Wycliffe presbytery requests that Council appoint a study committee to investigate various entities, organizations, or churches that the CREC might possibly join, or with whom the CREC might develop some official relationship. The committee would be tasked with gathering information on the identity and work of such entities, and also the potential benefits, dangers, or future obligations, of requesting membership in or a relationship with such entities. The council will appoint the committee by June 2015, and the committee will report to the 2017 council, to better inform any future action of council in this area. The Committee will investigate all entities requested by Council, along with any entities that they deem beneficial to include in their report.

c. Proposals from Minister of Council

(14/10/8:28) Pastor Strawbridge moved to adopt VIII. c. 1; Pastor Farley seconded; Discussion; a friendly amendment was offered to add “or other electronic communication” after both occurrences of “video conference”, amendment approved; **Motion passed unanimously**

1. Concerning Constitution Article V

Motion: Article V is amended by adding a new section C and renumbering all subsequent sections.

C. At stated meetings of the broader assemblies, a delegate may not be counted to establish a quorum if he is not physically present at the meeting. Delegates may participate in discussion by telephone, video conference, or other electronic communication, but may neither make motions nor vote on them. Nothing in this section applies to *ad hoc* meetings of the broader assemblies, which may be conducted by telephone or video conference, or other electronic communication.

Rationale:

The CREC culture has always been built on relationships and trust between men. Conducting the church’s business well depends heavily upon looking one another in the eye while discussing and debating issues. While teleconferencing adds

a level of convenience and cost saving, most presbyteries have only one stated meeting per year. Regular, physical attendance is important and should be strongly encouraged. While technology is improving and brings great benefits in its own way, we should not adopt practices that discourage face to face meetings and thereby enable men to avoid crucial, in-person communication once or twice a year. As the CREC grows and the number of presbyteries multiply, increased proximity of the churches in any given presbytery will enable easier access to stated meetings.

(14/10/8:29) Pastor Niell moved to adopt VIII. c. 2; Pastor Bryan seconded;
Motion passed unanimously.

2. Concerning Constitution Article V.D.

Motion: Article V.D is amended as follows:

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 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. **This rule shall apply only in a situation when a church cannot field a second delegate while the church's officer is serving as Minister of a broader assembly because the church lacks a sufficient number of installed officers to field a second delegate. It may not be used to give a single delegate a second vote if another officer of the church is installed but elects, for whatever reason, not to attend a meeting. If a newly elected Minister is needed to step into the chair during the meeting at which he is elected, his church's remaining delegate may have two votes at that meeting, notwithstanding the provisions of the previous two sentences in this section.**

Rationale:

This amendment clarifies an ambiguity in the existing language, which has become an issue in more than one presbytery. It addresses a situation that arises in which the

service of a minister of a smaller congregation has his church penalized in presbytery votes by depriving that church from having two votes at a meeting when said minister is serving the broader church in a presiding capacity. At the same time it avoids the error of encouraging absenteeism in the important activity of conducting presbytery business.

(14/10/8:30) Pastor Booth moved to adopt VIII. c. 3; Pastor Farley seconded; discussion; **Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Concerning Constitution Article IV.A

Motion: Article IV.A is amended by striking the parenthetical clause, as follows:

There are two broader assemblies in the CREC: the Presbytery and the Church Council. A minimum of two 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 verbiage which this amendment proposes to strike is an aside and is not good constitutional language. Other than noting an historical fact, it serves no practical purpose in the constitution.

(14/10/8:31) Pastor Bryan moved to adopt VIII. c. 4; Pastor Hemmeke seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Concerning church-related institutions

Motion: The following un-codified resolution is adopted by the CREC Council:

Whereas New St. Andrews College (NSA) is an independent liberal arts college which nevertheless recognizes the vision

ownership of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho (NSA Pol. Manual 3.1);

Whereas NSA recognizes the CREC in its policy manual as making up an essential part of its constituency; and

Whereas the CREC has previously stated in its Book of Memorials [Memorial D], that we

**“heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor.”
Therefore the CREC recognizes NSA as a church-related institution.**

Rationale:

The resolution was requested by a Board member of New St. Andrews College. It simply recognizes a current member church’s educational ministry as a church-related ministry with the CREC, in keeping with the language and spirit of Memorial E. If adopted, it would be an un-codified resolution of Council and would not be integrated into the Constitution, nor the Book of Procedures. It could appropriately be posted on the CREC public web site.

- IX. Reconciliation of Books of Procedure (Constitution, Article IV.A.6) See **Appendix G.**

(14/10/8:32) Pastor Lusk moved to approve item IX; Pastor Tollefson seconded; discussion; **Motion passed unanimously.**

- X. Other motions

1. Consideration of deferred Consent agenda Item a.

- a. Technical amendment to the CREC Constitution, Article III.

The CREC Constitution, Article III.C is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

C. Each church will adopt into its statement of faith at least one of the following:

1. Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)
2. American Westminster Confession of Faith (1788)
3. Three Forms of Unity:
 - A. Belgic Confession (1561);
 - B. Heidelberg Catechism;
 - C. Canons of Dort (1619)

4. The London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
5. The Savoy Declaration (1658)
6. The Reformed Evangelical Confession
8. The Second Helvetic Confession
9. The 39 Articles of Christian Religion

Rationale:

Article III.C currently lists the Three Forms, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Synod at Dort as four separate items, implying that a church can choose any one of them alone as its confessional position. This was not the intent and no church has ever attempted to enter the CREC using only one of the three parts of the Three Forms independently. Historically, they have been linked. This amendment would reconnect them.

(14/10/8:33) Pastor Niell moved to replace the language in the technical amendment to Article III C of the Constitution with the language below; Pastor Craw seconded; discussion; **Motion passed unanimously.**

“C. Each church will adopt into its statement of faith at least one of the following:

1. Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)
2. American Westminster Confession of Faith (1788)
3. Three Forms of Unity (**the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dordt**)
- 4. The Belgic Confession (1561)**
- 5. The Heidelberg Catechism**
6. The London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
7. The Savoy Declaration (1658)
8. The Reformed Evangelical Confession
9. The Second Helvetic Confession
10. The 39 Articles of Christian Religion

2. Financial support of the Presiding Minister of Council

(14/10/8:34) Pastor Hemmeke moved to encourage churches to financially support the Presiding Minister of Council as they are able; Pastor Vanderveen seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

XI. Election of Presiding Minister for 2014-17
The nomination of Pastor Douglas Wilson has been received.

Pastor Wilson addressed the council; vote: 11 yea, 3 nay; Pastor Wilson is elected as the next Presiding Minister of Council.

XII. Election of Presiding Minister *pro tempore* for 2014-17
The nomination of Pastor Randy Booth has been received.
Pastor Booth elected unanimously.

XIII. Date and location for 2017 Triennial Meeting of Council.
An invitation from Athanasius Presbytery has been received to hold the 2017 Triennial meeting at San Destin Conference Center, Ft. Walton/Destin, Florida (near Pensacola).
A motion to approve will be entertained.

(14/10/8:35) Pastor Niell moved to approve XIII; Pastor Brito seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

XIV. Good of the Order

(14/10/8:36) Pastor Strawbridge moved on behalf of Augustine Presbytery that “Council commends Pastor Jack Phelps for his service as Presiding Minister of Council, for a job done exceedingly well and we thank Covenant Bible Church in Chugiak, Alaska for their sacrificial service rendered to the broader Church through Pastor Phelps’ labors. We call upon all CREC congregations to provide a monetary gift to Pastor Phelps in thanks for his service.” Pastor Bryan seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

(14/10/8:37) Pastor Strawbridge moved for Council to express thanks to Pastor John Stoos and of Christ the King Church Sacramento for their labors to make the 2014 council possible and enjoyable; Pastor Booth seconded; **Motion passed unanimously.**

Pastor Stoos recognized and thanked the many volunteers who helped make council possible.

XV. Closing Prayer
Pastor Sauder closed in prayer

XVI. Adjournment
PMC Phelps declared the meeting adjourned.