GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

of the

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

REVISION AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2026

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CONSTITUTION

Preamble

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. As a Communion, we recognize the ordination of all the ministers of our churches. Additionally, we recognize the baptisms of all the members of our churches, and we receive at the Lord's Table all communicant members of our churches. 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.

With patterns of church order and confessional standards, one of the fundamental requirements of Scripture is honesty (Ex. 20:16). Consequently, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we charge you, the generations who will follow us in this confederation, to submit to the Scriptures with sincere and honest hearts, and to the standards of this confederation as consistent with the teaching of Scripture. When a portion of our order and confession is found to be out of conformity to Scripture, we charge you to amend it honestly, openly, and constitutionally, as men who must

give an account to the God who searches the hearts of men. We charge you in the name of the Lord to abhor all forms of ignoring our intentions in what we have set down through dissembling, reinterpretation, dishonesty, relativism, pretended explanations, presumed spiritual maturity, assumed scholarly sophistication, compromise with any forms of sexual and gender-related activism, or outright lying, so that the living God will not strike you and your children with a curse. We charge you to serve Him in all diligence and honesty, so that the blessings of the covenant may extend to your children for a thousand generations.

Our desire is to acknowledge, preserve and manifest unity, preserve purity, and advance Christ's kingdom in an orderly and reasonable way, resulting in mutual edification, accountability, and spiritual discipline. Membership in this confederation is in no way meant to exclude warm relations with other faithful Christian bodies. We therefore welcome and encourage any relations with likeminded churches, presbyteries and denominations that are consistent with this Constitution.

Article I. Authority of Scripture

A. The Scriptures are always the ultimate and inerrant court of appeal (Ps. 18:30; 119:89; Matt. 4:4; John 16:12–15; Rom. 3:1–2; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Because this is a constitutional document, a certain emphasis must be placed on creeds and confessions in what follows (Acts 15:1–31; 16:4–5; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17–18; John 1:14; 1 John 4:2–3; 2 John 7). However, in no way is it our intention to set such confessions of faith above or alongside the Scriptures. Our expectation is that all our churches will routinely teach and preach the whole counsel of God as expressed in Scripture (Acts 20:27; Matt. 4:4), and in all matters of doctrinal discussion and debate, an appeal to Scripture will always be the first resort. In accordance with our creedal and confessional standards, we acknowledge the pre-eminence of Scripture.

B. Our intention is to submit to all those principles regarding church order, which are clearly required by Scripture, or required by deductions from Scripture, which can be understood through good and necessary consequence. For the rest, we desire to operate in terms of a sanctified Christian prudence, with all things done in good order and biblical decency. We make no claim that every detail of our confederated order is found in Scripture. At all times, we seek to

reflect the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ps. 133; Eph. 4:3, 13).

Article II. The Offices

A. The CREC affirms that church officers (including deacons) are to be males, in accordance with the teaching of Scripture. The CREC takes no constitutional position on the validity of 2-, 3- or 4-office systems of church polity. In a 2-office system, the offices are Elder and Deacon. A 3-office system distinguishes between Pastor, Elder, and Deacon, while a 4-office system distinguishes between Pastor, Teacher/Doctor, Elder, and Deacon. These documents use the word Pastor or Minister to refer to the man who has primary responsibility for officiating at the Lord's Service.

B. Within the CREC, each elder and pastor must be a member of the church in which he serves. This requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis by a three-quarters (¾) vote of the presbytery. If a Pastor is not serving on a session but is engaged in ministerial work (e.g., chaplain, missionary, etc.), his status as an ordained minister may continue to be recognized with the approval of his local session and Presbytery.

C. Each congregation must be committed in principle and practice to government by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Jas. 5:14). Congregations without a plurality of elders must have accountability with another established CREC church.

D. Elders and pastors must be elected or affirmed by the congregation according to the congregation's constitution.

E. Each congregation will be served as possible by a plurality of deacons (Acts 6:5–7; 1 Tim. 3:8–13).

F. The CREC affirms the need for spiritually-disciplined, well-educated pastors, qualified in their households, grounded in rigorous and wise handling of the Scriptures, and exhibiting a thorough understanding of the biblical world and life view (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9).

G. Any candidate for pastor, regardless of his level of formal education, shall be examined before ordination (See Article IV.A.2.g). The candidate shall be examined by a local session of elders with regard to his manner of life, knowledge of Scripture, and doctrinal under-

standing. The presbytery shall 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.D.5.

H. If a pastor has already been ordained within the CREC, he is not required to undergo a complete re-examination by another Presbytery (see BOP XI & Appendix B). If a man has been ordained outside the CREC, the local congregation ought to seek the wisdom of the presbytery in the examination of his ministerial credentials and views (see BOP XI & Appendix B).

I. If a church having a 4-office system desires the ordination of a teacher to be recognized on a broader scale within the CREC, comparable to the way the ordination of a pastor or minister currently is, such a church may request a modified examination of that man by Presbytery.

J. All institutions and processes of ministerial education and training that are formally associated with the CREC must be governed under the authority and supervision of a local Session of elders in a local CREC church (2 Tim. 2:1–2).

Article III. Local Congregations

A. We hold the local congregation has primacy in the structure of biblical church government (Heb. 13:7, 17) without denying the important blessings and obligations which come from broader connections and fellowship.

B. Each church will adopt into its statement of faith the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon in the form found in the Book of Confessions (1 Tim. 6:12). A CREC local church may use forms of the creeds that differ from the forms found in the CREC Book of Confessions, 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 creeds which have been modernized for spelling and usage are acceptable. Forms which have been altered with regard to doctrinal content are not.

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 (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of the Synod at Dordt)
   4. Belgic Confession (1561)
   5. Heidelberg Catechism
   6. London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
   7. Savoy Declaration (1658)
   8. Reformed Evangelical Confession (see the Book of Confessions)
   9. Second Helvetic Confession
   10. 39 Articles of Christian Religion

D. Each church shall adopt into its statement of faith the Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender, and Marriage adopted by CREC Council on August 26, 2020, and incorporated into the CREC Book of Confessions.

E. Criteria for membership

1. Before a congregation can be accepted into CREC membership it must:
    a. have its own constitution;
    b. have been in existence for at least two years;
    c. have at least two local elders, who are members of the church;
    d. have enough support from members to meet all regular expenses necessary to sustain the life of that congregation.
2. Congregations seeking membership with the CREC which do not meet the criteria set forth in subsection 1 of this section must come under the care of an existing CREC church and will be characterized as mission churches. Mission churches may have non-voting delegations at presbytery and church council meetings.
3. Membership of Mission Churches
    a. When a mission church comes to meet the criteria for a particularized church, it may be accepted into voting membership of the CREC by a two-thirds vote of presbytery.
    b. Any mission church sponsored in another geographical territory must receive the approval of the presbytery in which it resides.
    c. Any mission church accepted into the CREC membership must be particularized in the presbytery in which it resides.

F. Form of Subscription

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.

G. All members in good standing in a local CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church regardless of confessional differences between the churches as included in the Book of Procedures, Article XIII Sacramental Cooperation. The member's new church shall write to the previous church requesting a letter of transfer.

H. Controversies within a local congregation regarding matters arising from differences between our various confessions will not be adjudicated beyond the local church level. All churches agree to work cheerfully and carefully in their study of doctrinal differences, and to strive for like-mindedness with one another (Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16).

I. The worship and work of each local congregation is ultimately to be governed by the teaching and godly examples supplied throughout all Scripture. As such, the following liturgical roles shall be restricted to males during Divine Services: officiating the service, preaching, public reading of Scripture, prayer, administering the sacraments, and any other liturgical roles as determined by the local Session.

J. After sending at least one candidate delegation to a stated meeting of presbytery and having been seated as a Candidate Church, a church may be admitted to membership in a presbytery through a two thirds vote of the presbytery at its next stated meeting. The presbytery shall normally examine the pastor-elder delegation, especially with regard to their confessional status, sound doctrine, submission to CREC authority, and desire to uphold other CREC churches with all peace and love. They may remove themselves by whatever means their respective constitutions allow. When a church joins the CREC, this entire Constitution, together with the confessional standards

required by Article III, must be adopted into that church's constitutional documents, according to the constitutional processes and standards of that church. The membership of the local church in the CREC is finalized at that point, and not before. New members shall make vows to the faithfulness and commitment to the churches and standards of the CREC. Likewise, current members should pledge to uphold the new church in prayer and love.

K. In making a motion to seat a candidate church, a sponsoring church needs to be prepared to answer questions concerning the general health of that church and the likelihood of that church being able to embrace the CREC constitution when considered for full membership. The church which makes the motion to seat the candidate church must be the church which moves to receive the church into full membership when that issue comes before presbytery. The church which moves to receive the church into membership must be prepared to answer questions related to the doctrinal integrity of the church's confession, and the moral, spiritual, and covenantal health of the families of the officers.

L. The candidacy of a church will not be allowed to extend beyond the third presbytery meeting from which that church was first seated—that is, two years after their first seating as a candidate church—unless a two-thirds vote by presbytery to override and extend the status beyond two years occurs.

M. When a church joins the CREC, the existing ordination of all its officers is thereby accepted. Nevertheless, observations and questions concerning elder qualification may occur in the discussion of that church's potential admission. Any elder from a candidate church who wishes to be recognized as an Ordained Minister or Pastor, should have their credentials examined by a Presbytery commission or committee in accordance with the Book of Procedures (Article XI.E, "Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC") prior to the church being admitted into membership.

N. *Pro Tempore* Elders

1. A CREC Session may ask a nearby CREC church Session to have one of its members (or a pastor *emeritus* under its care) serve on its Session as a *Pro Tempore* (for a time) elder. His renewable term, and purpose shall be specified by the Session. The purpose may be enriching its counsel, or also to temporarily supply

a plurality of elders. Presiding Ministers should be informed and offer counsel before proceeding.

2. Member churches whose Session number is reduced to one local pastor/elder, shall be reduced in status to mission church at the second consecutive presbytery meeting in that situation, or earlier, at the presbytery's discretion, regardless of *pro tempore* elder activity on said Session. An established Session will take oversight of the work until it is ready to return to full member status. Member churches whose Session number is reduced to one local pastor/elder shall inform the Presiding Minister of Presbytery immediately.
3. Pastors/elders from two different Sessions shall not serve on each other's Sessions, where either Session has only one local pastor/elder, without consent from the presbytery. A Session with only one local elder shall not allow him to serve as Pro Tem on another Session, without consent from the presbytery.

Article IV. The Broader Assemblies

A. General Provisions

1. There are two broader assemblies in the CREC: the Presbytery and the Church Council. A minimum of five local churches is necessary to establish a presbytery. Geographical boundaries of presbyteries may overlap, but in considering this, presbyteries are urged to remember the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12; 3 John 9).
2. The authority of the broader assemblies of the CREC is set forth in various parts of this Constitution. The assemblies shall only deal with ecclesiastical matters in an ecclesiastical manner and hence their authority is restricted to the following powers:
   a. to hold stated and *ad hoc* meetings;
   b. to amend their standards following due process;
   c. to designate *ad hoc* committees;
   d. to address matters referred to them by the session of a member church or by another CREC broader assembly;
   e. to formulate plans of action concerning matters common to the churches;
   f. to admit new churches into membership;

g. to evaluate men for ordination (see BOP XI & Appendix B).

h. to inquire into the spiritual health of member churches and to confer with other assemblies to this end;

i. to offer a timely pastoral voice to public issues of common concern;

j. to intervene when a local church's session is at an impasse, either through mediation or by appointing officers from other CREC churches to sit *pro tempore* on that church's session, to the end that these appointees participate in sessional actions that address the impasse and restore harmony while respecting the existing constitutional standards of the church;

k. to mediate when a local church's session is a party in a dispute with the session of another CREC church, with a CREC broader assembly, or with a non-CREC church;

l. to require mediation and arbitration, when appropriate, in order to reconcile brothers;

m. to protect its own purity and peace through judicial action following due process;

n. to censure or expel a member church following due process;

o. by two-thirds majority vote and pending judicial process, censure a member church or a CREC officer. A censure under this provision does not affect a member church's voting rights or appeal rights in the broader assemblies.

p. to receive and send delegates to broader assemblies of other denominations (see BOP XIV).

3. No broader assembly may own property. All property within the CREC will be owned by the local congregations. General costs associated with hosting a broader assembly will be borne by the host church of the broader assembly. Specific costs (e.g. food and travel) will be borne by the delegates or sending churches.

4. The assemblies may form no standing committees or boards. Every committee must be *ad hoc* and automatically dissolve when it completes its assigned task, or submits its assigned report to the assembly. Assigned tasks may not be open-ended, allowing for de facto standing committees.

5. All retirement or pension plans for CREC ministers, teachers, missionaries, etc. will be under the authority, management and oversight of the local churches, and will not be the responsibility of the broader assemblies.

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 Presiding 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 Presiding Minister of Presbytery 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.

7. Assemblies may from time-to-time address by means of memorials (see Article IX) or confessional statements issues not included or not sufficiently addressed, given current circumstances, in the historic creeds and confessions. Any new memo-

rial or confessional statement must be approved as a draft at a stated Council and adopted at a subsequent stated Council.

8. Assemblies express their collective mind by means of approving motions, in which a delegate requests the assembly to take some particular action.

B. Representation

1. Each congregation in a presbytery will send up to two elders as voting representatives to each meeting of presbytery—ordinarily, one of whom is serving in the capacity of pastor if such exists in the local church. A voting representative of a congregation must be a member of that congregation, unless an exception is granted by presbytery.

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

3. The various presbyteries will each send an equal number of delegates to council, not including the Presiding Minister of Council among the number sent from his presbytery. Each council shall determine the number of delegates that will represent the presbyteries to the subsequent council; the number will be so determined as to create a council of between ten and eighteen delegates in all, not including the Presiding Minister of Council. If there are more than nine presbyteries, each presbytery will be represented at council with two delegates. Delegates to Council are to be elected at the first meeting of Presbytery following a regular meeting of Council, and at any subsequent stated meeting of presbytery at the discretion of presbytery. Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall maintain a current roster of Council delegates from that presbytery. Elected Council delegates must also be seated as Presbytery delegates during the same year as the Council meeting.

C. Work and Authority of the Presiding Minister

1. Broader Assemblies shall elect a Presiding Minister from their assembled delegates when that office is vacant. In the event that no more than one Council delegate is willing or able to serve or

is nominated as Presiding Minister of Council, the assembled presbytery delegates also shall be eligible for nomination as Presiding Minister of Council.

2. The Presiding Ministers of Presbytery and Council serve three-year terms. They assume authority and responsibilities following adjournment of the assembly meeting at which they are elected, which concludes the term of their predecessor.

3. All nominations for the position of Presiding Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. If no nominations are received prior to the posting of the agenda, nominations may be made from the floor of the assembly. Upon the establishment of a new presbytery, Council shall assign a year to begin the three-year rotation for the election of the Presiding Minister of that presbytery. The presbytery shall have the discretion to have its first Presiding Minister serve one or two additional years in order to meet this rotation requirement.

4. Term limitation

    a. No Presiding Minister of Presbytery may serve two consecutive terms as Presiding Minister unless no qualified candidate is willing to serve (1 Peter 5:1–4). In such cases a two-thirds vote can extend the term of the current Presiding Minister.

    b. The Presiding Minister of Council may be elected to a second consecutive term by a two-thirds vote of Council. A Presiding Minister of Council may not be elected to a third consecutive term unless the Council determines by a three-fourths majority that the circumstances are extraordinary.

5. Each Presiding Minister must be concurrently serving as a member of the local session or be a pastor *emeritus*. If a Presiding Minister ceases to serve in such a local office, or loses his *emeritus* status, then his term as Presiding Minister ceases at that time. Before his term is completed, a Presiding Minister may resign his position, or he may be removed by a three-fourths vote of the assembly.

6. Presiding Ministers *pro tempore*

    a. Assemblies shall also elect a Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore*, to serve in cases of the Presiding Minister's absence, or to fill out the term of the Presiding Minister if the office of

Presiding Minister becomes vacant.

b. When Council elects a Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore*, he shall also serve as Assistant to the Presiding Minister of Council.

7. Presiding Ministers properly act on behalf of the broader assemblies when actions have been declared in writing by the Presiding Minister and then included in that Minister's written report to the next duly constituted meeting of the broader assembly. At the meeting, the Presiding Minister's report must be received and acted upon by the broader assembly in accordance with the procedure described in the Meeting Protocols.

8. With regard to meetings, the Presiding Ministers of Presbytery and Council have the following authority and responsibilities: to prepare agendas, chair the meetings, submit reports of their work, call *ad hoc* meetings when necessary, and prepare minutes of the meetings to be posted in public. In addition, the Presiding Minister of Church Council shall bear the responsibility for maintaining a true and accurate copy of the CREC Constitution, reflecting all amendments and additions thereto, and for making the Constitution available by means of electronic publishing.

9. The Presiding Minister of Presbytery and Council is also a spokesman and representative, whose authority and responsibilities in that capacity are as follows:

   a. First, between meetings of the broader assembly, the Presiding 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 Presiding 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; making formal recommendations (whether for or against) ministerial candidates for ordination; removing a member church; requiring arbitration; and adjudicating a trial.

   b. Second, as representative of Presbytery or Council, the Presiding Minister has the authority to encourage and spiritually strengthen the sessions of elders within his broader assembly, meet with the Presiding Ministers of other broader

assemblies, both within and without the CREC, to encourage them or to be encouraged, and to inquire about the spiritual and doctrinal health of other broader assemblies as well as the churches within his own assembly.

c. Third, Presiding Ministers are to act according to the authority conferred to them by virtue of their office and all their actions are to be confined and limited to the authority specified by the Constitution of the CREC and they shall report to Presbytery or Council on their work as spokesman and representative. Additionally, prior to a Presiding Minister censuring a CREC church or officer he must receive approval from two other Presiding Ministers.

d. Fourth, Presiding Ministers have the discretion and authority to appoint assistants, clerks, or, when the Presiding Minister *Pro Tempore* is not available, chairmen of assemblies, on a case-by-case basis.

10. The Presiding Ministers of Presbytery (PMOP) and of Council (PMOC), provide a pastoral service to the broader church and, therefore, have the right to receive remuneration for their service (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1–12a; cp. Romans 15:27). The churches to whom they minister are obligated to provide for the needs of their ministry. Each church should give in proportion to its ability. The PM may waive his right to receive remuneration from the churches (cf. 1 Cor. 9:12b–18). The stipends for the PMOC and PMOP will be set by council and presbytery, respectively, and administered by the Presiding Minister's local church.

D. Referrals, Appeals and Complaints

1. General Provisions

a. Referrals, Appeals and Complaints filed under the provisions of this Article are subject to adjudication by a Court, duly appointed by the Presiding Minister of the broader assembly to which the action is filed.

i. Presbytery Courts shall consist of no fewer than three members, all of whom must be duly ordained and installed CREC ministers or elders of a local CREC congregation.

ii. Council Courts shall consist of no fewer than five

members, all of whom must be Council delegates who have been elected by their respective presbyteries as representatives to Council.

b. The Presiding Minister who appoints a Court shall not serve as a member of that Court, nor shall he participate in the deliberations of the Court. He shall be available to the Court to give advice concerning process issues, but deciding the matter is solely within the authority of duly appointed members of the Court, acting as a body.

c. All actions arising from this Article at the Presbytery level shall first be heard and adjudicated by a duly appointed Court of that Presbytery. At the recommendation of the Court, the action may result in a presbyterial trial.

d. The final decision to elevate a matter to a presbyterial trial rests within the sole discretion of the Presiding Minister of that Presbytery. Except under extraordinary circumstances, only an action that may result in the defrocking of a CREC minister would be elevated to a presbyterial trial. When held, presbyterial trials shall be conducted in accordance with provisions set forth in the CREC Book of Procedures.

2. Finality of local church decisions.

Issues relating to the local congregation which may lawfully be brought before the broader assemblies are specified in this section. Except in the case of referrals, appeals, or complaints authorized and accepted under this section, all local church decisions are final and may not be reviewed by the broader assemblies (Presbytery or Council). Nothing in this section prevents local churches from seeking, or the broader assemblies from offering, informal counsel and advice. To the contrary, it is strongly encouraged as the best way of avoiding needless appeals and referrals.

3. Referrals.

A referral is a written request by a local church Session or any member of the Session or a regional Presbytery asking a broader assembly (Presbytery or Council, as the case may be) to accept jurisdiction for deciding a matter that would normally be decided by the more local assembly. Normally, all matters should be handled at the local church level. However, should a local church Session or any of its members, or subsequently

a Presbytery, determine that the matter implicates the policies or reputation of a broader assembly, or that it otherwise justifies the consideration of a broader assembly, the more local assembly or any member of a church Session or Presbytery may refer the matter to the broader assembly. All referrals should be sent to the Presiding Minister of the broader assembly. The Presiding Minister may, subject to approval of the broader assembly, exercise discretion to accept jurisdiction over the matter. The Presiding Minister may subsequently, subject to approval of the broader assembly, remand the matter to the more local assembly.

4. Appeals.
    a. Definition: An appeal is an action brought by a person or persons who are or were members of a CREC church (including mission churches), against whom a formal action has been taken by a local CREC judicatory (a church session or a broader assembly) and who are aggrieved by such action. It may also be a result of a formal action taken by an assembly in response to a complaint (Const. Art. IV.D.5). It constitutes a request to remove jurisdiction from one judicatory to another judicatory.
    b. Any member or former member of a CREC church shall possess a right of appeal regarding judicial actions of which he may be or was the subject. All matters must be adjudicated at the level of the local church before an appeal may be made. Any appeal shall be filed with the Presbytery of which the local congregation is a member. At the conclusion of the matter at the Presbytery level, either party retains the right to make further appeal to Council.
    c. The broader assemblies, through the Presiding Minister, must refuse to hear frivolous or unconstitutional appeals. The Presiding Minister is also free to deny an appeal if the appellant has overtly discredited himself in his manner of bringing the appeal or the judicial action appealed resulted in harmless error. Such an action must be reported to the broader assembly for ratification (Article IV.C.9.a).
    d. The decision of a Council Court shall be considered settled and binding unless and until it is found by a future Council to be in conflict with the Scripture or the Constitution of the

CREC. Decisions of Council may be appealed to a future Council, though the future Council is not obligated to hear such an appeal.

5. Complaints.
   a. Definition: A complaint is a request for a judicial decision to be made against a current CREC individual member or assembly on a charge that has not been adjudicated either because the local assembly refused to hear the case, the local assembly resolved the case without formal action, the local assembly is one of the parties charged, or the complainant is from outside the CREC.
   b. Complaints against individuals must be first addressed at the local church level. If the matter is resolved by a formal action of the Session, the right of appeal as set forth in Subsection 3 may be invoked. If formal action has been taken by a CREC assembly the matter is an appeal not a complaint.
   c. A complaint against a CREC assembly may not be brought except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. To be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be husband and wife.
   d. A complaint against the Session of a local church may be brought to a broader assembly only under the following circumstances:
      i. when the Session of elders is accused of participating in or tolerating grievous dishonesty in subscription to the doctrinal or constitutional standards of the local church; or
      ii. when the Session of elders is accused of gross misbehavior.
   e. When accusations of grievous dishonesty or gross misbehavior on the part of the Session of a local church are made to or from other local churches or presented to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery or Council, the Session under accusation must be promptly informed. However, irresponsible accusations must be rejected and the member making the complaint should be directed back to his own Session.
   f. If a complaint is brought against a CREC assembly by some-

one who is not a member of a CREC church, the CREC, in Presbytery, Council, or through its appropriate Presiding Minister, can agree to hear the case if all of the following conditions have been met:

i. The Presiding Minister has established that one or more of the conditions in IV.D.5.a applies.

ii. The Presiding Minister has established that the government of the church where the complainant is a member affirms the truth of the Apostles' Creed, and is willing to give due weight, respect and consideration to the decision of the CREC. To satisfy this requirement, the affirmation must be set forth in a document and submitted to the Presiding Minister.

iii. The charges as framed have two or three available and accountable witnesses listed for each specified complaint. To be considered separate testimony, the witnesses may not be husband and wife.

iv. The complainant and his church have not overtly discredited themselves in the manner of bringing the charges.

g. The broader assemblies must refuse to hear frivolous or unconstitutional complaints.

6. The decisions of the assemblies with regard to the local congregation are spiritually authoritative. If the elders of a particular congregation choose to refuse the instruction of the broader church, the congregation may do so without deprivation of property. However, if their disregard of godly counsel is particularly egregious, the congregation may be removed from membership in the CREC, in accordance with constitutional procedure.

7. After a fair and open hearing at Presbytery, a congregation may be removed from membership in the Presbytery by a two-thirds vote of the Presbytery. Upon such occasions, the removed congregation retains the full right of appeal to Council.

Article V. Meeting Protocols

A. The Presbytery must hold at least one stated meeting each calendar year. Each presbytery shall individually determine the number of stated meetings it shall hold per year, providing that the determination is made and announced prior to January 1, of each year.

B. As provided in Article IV of this Constitution, the Presiding Minister has the authority to call an *ad hoc* meeting of his respective assembly. However, if two thirds of the churches submit a written request to the Presiding Minister, an *ad hoc* presbytery meeting will be called. Two weeks' notice is required for all *ad hoc* meetings. The decision to call for an *ad hoc* meeting of the Presbytery cannot be made at a stated meeting of Presbytery. Ad hoc meetings may be conducted online.

C. The Council will have a stated meeting every three years. In the year that Council meets, Presbyteries must have a stated meeting at the same place and time. Once a year, the Presiding Minister of Council will meet informally for deliberation with the Presiding Ministers of Presbyteries and Council delegates to address matters common to the churches. If two thirds of the Presbyteries submit a written request to the Presiding Minister of Council, an *ad hoc* Council meeting can be called. The decision to call for an *ad hoc* meeting of Council cannot be made at a triennial Council meeting. The requirement that Presbyteries convene at the same place and time as Council does not apply to *ad hoc* meetings of Council. In times of extreme emergency (e.g., war, active persecution, etc.), the presiding minister of a broader assembly may convene a meeting of that assembly in any form he deems acceptable. The meeting will be considered legitimate and authorized if a quorum assembles in response, and four-fifths of the assembled delegates approve the presiding minister's actions.

D. Acts of the Broader Assemblies

    1. Broader assemblies act properly when

        a. In a duly constituted meeting, the measure is moved, seconded, carried by the appropriate number of votes, entered in the minutes, and approved in the minutes; or

        b. An action is declared in writing by the Presiding Minister and then included in that Minister's written report to the

next duly constituted meeting of the broader assembly. At the meeting, the Presiding Minister's report must be received by the broader assembly, his actions reviewed and voted upon, and either approved or disapproved, with the results recorded as such in the approved minutes.

c. Actions of the Presiding Minister of Council on behalf of Council reported to all and approved by two-thirds of Presbyteries shall be deemed as approved by the CREC Council. When two-thirds of the Presbyteries ratify an action or adopt a report, it will be considered an act of Council. The Constitution and Confessional Standards cannot be altered or modified by this means.

d. Upon approval by a three-fourths vote of Council, a Council Committee may recommend actions to all the Presbyteries for a vote at their next stated Presbytery meeting. If three-fourths of the Presbyteries pass the recommended action, it shall be considered an action of Council.

E. At votes of the broader assemblies, each delegate has one vote. The Presiding Minister may not vote, and so in those cases when a church has only one vote because one of its delegates has been elected Presiding Minister, the church may put forth a new delegate to take the place of the Presiding 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 Presiding 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. This section also applies to a Presiding Minister *pro tempore* presiding in place of a Presiding Minister.

F. Amending the agenda in stated meetings requires a two-thirds majority vote. The agenda for *ad hoc* meetings may include only those issues related to the stated reasons for calling the meeting.

G. The agenda of any stated Presbytery or Council meeting must be

posted on the public electronic page maintained by that assembly's Presiding Minister no less than thirty days and no more than sixty days prior to the meeting.

H. Full minutes of all the assembly proceedings will be kept. The public minutes and records of the assembly will be published on a public electronic page maintained by the church of the Presiding Minister, with that Minister responsible for its contents. The Presiding Ministers shall ensure that approved minutes and current versions of the Books of Procedures for all Presbyteries and Council and of the CREC Constitution shall be available on the CREC web page. When revised, these documents shall be posted on or linked to the CREC web page within thirty days of their revision. Whenever new presbyteries are formed, the responsibility for the archives of the predecessor presbyteries remains with the new presbyteries having the same name. Minutes of confidential proceedings will be distributed in hard copy to all the member churches in the Presbytery. The costs associated with this process will be borne by the church of the Presiding Minister. Minutes must be posted within two weeks of their approval.

I. The minutes of the broader assemblies will be approved after the Presiding Minister has circulated a draft following the adjournment of the assembly, and has allowed reasonable opportunity for revision. The minutes require a two-thirds majority to be approved, and lack of response from a delegate will be considered an affirmative vote. The Presiding Minister will oversee this process of finalizing assembly minutes within sixty days.

J. The quorum for the Church Council will be two thirds of the voting delegates. The quorum for a Presbytery will be representation by two-thirds of the member churches in the Presbytery.

K. Setting time limits for floor debate or moving the previous question requires a two-thirds vote.

L. The broader assemblies have the authority to call for an executive session at their discretion by a simple majority vote. In executive session, the assembly meets in private, the contents of the discussion are treated as confidential, no motions are approved, and no minutes are kept.

M. The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The

delegates can make motions but cannot vote.

N. A simple majority of an assembly may seat delegations of mission churches, candidate churches, other churches, forming churches, or interested groups. Such delegations are encouraged to come as observers and friends, or as prospective members of the CREC. Such delegations may not vote, although they may address the assembly at the invitation of the Presiding Minister. They may not participate in debate without unanimous consent of the assembled delegates.

Article VI. Missions

A. All supported international or domestic CREC missionaries will not be sent by the Presbyteries or Church Council, but rather by the local church. As appropriate, the other churches in the Presbytery can offer encouragement and financial support, but the accountability of the missionaries will only be to the congregation, which is the sending body. As circumstances warrant, missionaries may seek a transfer of the sending authority from one local church to another, with the details to be worked out between the missionary and the elders of the respective congregations involved.

B. Unless commissioned by, sent by, or ministering under the authority of a member church, individuals or ministries shall not be considered foreign missionaries or missions of the CREC.

Article VII. Confessional Standards and Revision

A. The CREC holds as its foundational confession of faith the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon. These confessions are included in the Book of Confessions.

B. The CREC holds generally to the system of doctrine reflected in the great creeds, catechisms, and confessions of the Reformation, and consequently requires all confederated churches to hold to at least one of the particular statements listed in Article III.C.

C. Revisions to the Book of Confessions must have a first reading at a stated meeting of the Church Council, and may then be brought to a vote at the subsequent stated meeting. Three quarters of the Presbyteries are required to propose revisions to any confession in the Book of Confessions. Such proposed revisions will be placed on a list of potential revisions maintained by the Presiding Minister, to await consideration at the appointed time.

D. Three quarters of the Presbyteries may remove proposed revisions to the Book of Confessions at any time prior to the Council when they are to be voted on. A proposed change to any confession in the Book of Confessions requires a three quarters majority in order to pass.

E. If a church's standing in the CREC is potentially affected by the process of confessional revision, that church has five years within which to make its first appeal to Presbytery.

Article VIII. Amendments

A. This Constitution of the CREC may be amended at any time by a three quarters majority at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Church Council, which includes properly scheduled *ad hoc* meetings. The Book of Confessions may not be amended under this Article, but only under the process established in Article VII.

Article IX. Memorials

A. Memorials state the position of the CREC on issues on which a confessional statement has not been made. Memorials are contained in the Book of Memorials and are incorporated by reference into this Constitution.

B. A candidate or mission church must declare any exceptions or reservations to the memorials prior to its becoming a CREC member. Member churches must immediately notify the broader assembly of any changes to their position on the memorials. If Presbytery determines that the exceptions or reservations place the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings according to Article IV. D. 5.

C. 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.

D. Memorials must be submitted in a form not to exceed 100 words. Memorials may be accompanied by one or more supporting resource papers, each not exceeding 5,000 words. (See Constitution Article X.) When a draft memorial(s), or its supporting paper(s), is submitted to Presbytery, it should also note its exact word count to aid in editorial discussions.

Article X. Resources

A. The CREC has three primary documents: the Constitution, the Book of Memorials, and the Book of Confessions. The confessional standards set forth in the Book of Confessions are incorporated by reference into this Constitution and are binding upon the churches as specified in Article III. The secondary documents are our Book of Procedures and our Book of Resources. The status of Resources is that they are commended for consideration, interaction, edification, training, and study. They do not necessarily represent the official position of the CREC. To be included in the Book of Resources, a two-thirds vote of Council is required.

BOOK *of* MEMORIALS

Introduction

Memorials state the position of the CREC on issues on which a confessional statement has not been made. Memorials are contained in the Book of Memorials and are incorporated by reference into the Constitution.

A candidate or mission church must declare any exceptions or reservations to the memorials prior to its becoming a CREC member. Member churches must immediately notify the broader assembly of any changes to their position on the memorials. If presbytery determines that the exceptions or reservations place the church at odds with CREC standards, it may initiate proceedings under Article 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). A memorial must be approved as a draft at a stated council and adopted at a subsequent stated council.

Memorial A. Ministerial Training

We believe that ministerial training is best conducted under the oversight of a local session, including an intense apprenticeship within the church which tests and develops the gifts, skills, knowledge, and spiritual qualifications of the candidate. At the same time, we recognize that many local congregations lack the resources to provide rigorous academic training, including training in the original languages. Therefore, we still see a place for churches to send men to seminaries, while retaining their responsibility to oversee and facilitate the training.

Ideally seminaries would function as an academic extension which supplement the overall training program of the church.

Memorial B: Confessional Revision

Our process of confessional revision is established so that the differences between our churches may be resolved over time by a careful striving for like-mindedness. The process is established to work in a slow and deliberate fashion so that we will be less susceptible to various fads and winds of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

Memorial C: Christian Education

God has explicitly commanded parents to bring up their children in the education and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Given the impossibility of neutrality in education, we do heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor. While parents who do not fully understand the indispensability of Christian education should be warmly received into membership, we nevertheless encourage Christian parents to seek alternatives to the government school system. In cases, where Christian education is an impossibility, parents must be active and diligent in overseeing the education of their children.

Memorial D: Creation in Six Days

God is the Author of history. Poetic descriptions and multivalent meanings of Scriptural history never negate the reality of historical events. God reveals in Genesis 1 that he created all there is in the space of six days. Man is to pattern his own work-rest rhythm according to the pattern of God's work-rest rhythm in creation (Exodus 20:8-11), a command that assumes the reality and definition of the original creation days as being the normal twenty-four-hour days we experience. We reject any interpretation that redefines these days into anything other than six sequential twenty-four-hour days.

Memorial E. Terrorism and Warfare

Christians are called by our Lord to be peacemakers. We therefore renounce all acts of aggression and terrorism, while recognizing the right to self-defense for individuals and nations. Combat is lawful when it defends life, liberty, and property against criminal action. Biblical principles of warfare must be followed, never returning evil for evil, nor may women or children be mustered for combat. While God may use the actions of wicked men to administer judgment on persons or nations, His hidden decrees have not been revealed to us. Regardless, it is appropriate to respond to such events with humility and repentance.

Memorial F. Sexual Perversion

Confessing the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God, we together with the unanimous testimony of the historic Church believe that God has spoken clearly and sufficiently to the issue of human sexuality. Perversion, in its varied forms, whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, violates God's design for human sexuality and is sinful, therefore, in the eyes of God. The only remedy for this, and all other sin, is found in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All who have strayed from this confession, should return to biblical faithfulness in a spirit of repentance.

Memorial G. Worship

Corporate worship on the Lord's Day is one of our highest privileges and greatest duties. God draws us into his special presence to serve us in Word and Sacrament. He uses this time to transform us, and the world, into his likeness. A church's liturgy must be shaped by the biblical pattern of worship, including a confession of sin, the preaching of the Word, and celebrating the Lord's Supper. Worshipers must respond to God's service with submission and joy, singing psalms and hymns with glorious music. The Scriptures require regular participation in the life and worship of a local church.

Memorial H. Abortion

Because unborn humans from conception bear the image of God and are innocent of criminal wrongdoing, the act of abortion is murder and results in a corporate guilt which defiles the land when justice is not pursued on behalf of the innocent. Therefore, we oppose taking unborn human life by any means including the various types of abortive procedures, the use of the so- called morning after pill, or the use of abortifacients. Even in those rare circumstances when a pregnancy causes an immediate threat to the life of a mother, the overriding priority is to preserve life, not take it.

Memorial I. Human Sexuality

Humans are created in the image of God and therefore receive the highest honor among God's creatures. Humanity consists of two sexes—male and female—each with unique gifts, callings, and authority. God designed sexual intimacy to be enjoyed in marriage, between one man and one woman, for union, protection, companionship, and procreation of children. Any desire or act that deviates from this design is sinful and destructive, such as premarital sex, pornography, adultery, polygamy, homosexual behavior, and transgenderism. Christians must strive to forsake these sins, by the power of the Holy Spirit, trusting in the forgiveness of Jesus.

Memorial J. Nations

We believe God made all nations from one man, Adam. At Babel God scattered their rebellious unity. But God, by the cross of Christ and His Spirit poured out at Pentecost, is reuniting and reconciling the nations, drawing them into one Church, the Body of Christ. Loving family, nation, and stranger in their order, idolizing or destroying none, we repudiate nationalistic and ethnic hatred, vainglory, and persecution. We seek to unite the nations in the worship of the triune God, sanctifying all peoples, languages, and customs to His glory.

BOOK *of* CONFESSIONS

Introduction

The Book of Confessions is one of the three primary documents of the CREC (Constitution, Article X.A). The confessional standards set forth in it are incorporated by reference into the Constitution and are binding upon the churches as specified in Article III of the Constitution. Revisions to the Book of Confessions are governed by Article VII of the Constitution and may not be made under Article VIII.

The Ecumenical Creeds, the Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender, and Marriage, and the Reformed Evangelical Confession were removed from the Constitution and placed in the Book of Confessions by Council on September 30, 2026, without alteration of their text. They are set forth below under the care and publication of the Presiding Minister of Council. The confessions named in Article III.C of the Constitution are published separately.

The Ecumenical Creeds

A. The Apostles' Creed (2nd century)

I/We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin, Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I/We 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/We 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 the 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/we 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/we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church; I/we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I/we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

C. Definition of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same

time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender, and Marriage

A. We confess that the church is subject to Christ, who is Lord over all. While church members ought to obey civil rulers in temporal things, provided they are not required by those authorities to sin (Mk. 12:13-17; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pt. 2:13-17), the church has a divine right to embody her beliefs in her practices and to carry out the mission Christ has entrusted to her without interference or hindrance. The church as an institution shall remain free from state control in faith, doctrine, and practice, and her members should not be forced to act contrary to their consciences, as informed by the Word of God. With these truths in view, we declare the church's right to reject any attempts on the part of the state to impose on her institutionally or her members individually unbiblical, unnatural definitions of marriage or sexuality.

B. God created man male and female in the beginning for this very reason, that they might be joined together in the covenant of marriage as one flesh (Mark 10:5ff). Marriage as a covenant bond between a man and a woman is an institution founded not in cultural convention or convenience, but in God's act of creation (Gen. 2:23-24).

C. We resist and reject all attempts to redefine marriage to include same-sex partnerships. Certainly, we desire to serve and love persons with homosexual desires or who engage in homosexual practices. We know we are fellow image bearers and fellow sinners along with them, and we long to show them the compassion of Christ. But

we cannot endorse the fulfillment of their desires under any circumstances. Rather, we call on persons with such desires to join us in trusting the Lord Jesus to forgive our sin through his shed blood and transform us by his healing grace.

D. We claim the right for our churches and church members (whatever their particular vocation) to refuse to host, officiate, or in any way support same-sex "marriage" ceremonies, not out of animus, but out of love for God, neighbor, and truth. Likewise, we refuse to host, officiate, or support other ceremonies that violate biblical teaching on marriage.

E. We reject transgenderism as a perversion of God's good creational order. There are only two sexes, male and female (Gen. 1:26-28). Sex is not fluid, it is binary. We reject the notion that gender is determined by one's feelings, or is detachable from biological and bodily givens. God forms each person genetically as a distinct male or female from the moment of conception. As God is the Creator, and makes each of us either male or female, we cannot unmake and remake ourselves into the opposite sex. Sex is an immutable feature of our identity as creatures; thus, it is impossible for anyone to change his or her sex.

F. Gender dysphoria should not be used to create a protected class of persons, in which one's feelings override the facts of biology, or in which the rights, dignity, and privacy of transgender persons override the rights, dignity, and privacy of others. Thus, we claim for our churches and church members (in whatever vocation they serve) the right to reject compliance with any public policies or laws that would require us to deny binary sexes, or to accept claims of gender identity that are contrary to one's God-assigned biology. We reject the legal redefinitions of sex and gender that divorce either of these realities from God-given biology. We claim the right to speak to people according to their God-given sex, rather than reinforcing gender dysphoric confusions by using alternative pronouns. We claim the right to restrict access to intimate facilities (e.g., bathrooms, nursing areas, shelters, etc.), to sex-specific events, etc., strictly according to God-given biological realities. In the case of someone who has already transitioned to the appearance of the opposite sex, the session of the local congregation will determine the wisest and most compassionate course of action.

G. All sexual sins can be forgiven through the shed blood of Christ, in-

cluding the practice of sodomy and transgenderism. But forgiveness can never be separated from confession and repentance; forgiveness can never be separated from denying oneself and taking up the cross daily; forgiveness can never be separated from fighting against sin and pursuing holiness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reformed Evangelical Confession

A. 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.

B. 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.

BOOK *of* PROCEDURES

Article I. Preface

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

Article II. Definitions

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

A. Adopt

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

B. Mediation

The attempt to settle a dispute through the active participation of a

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

C. Arbitration

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

Alternatively, a local church may voluntarily make a written request, consistent with their constitution, and agree beforehand to abide by the decisions of the Presiding Minister, which are subject to the approval of the presbytery.

D. Present

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

E. Ratify

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

F. Receive

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

Article III. Procedure for Receiving New Members into Presbytery

A. The voting status of new member churches shall begin the next presbytery meeting following their acceptance into membership. The delegates can make motions but cannot vote.

B. Delegates about to become new members shall normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.). They shall submit their constitution and bylaws to the Presiding Minister of the presbytery no later than 30 days prior to the stated meeting of the presbytery, for inclusion on the agenda of that meeting.

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

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

    2. 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?

    3. 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?

    4. 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?

    5. 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?

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

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

Article IV. Mission Churches

A. Purpose

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

B. Definitions

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

C. Procedure

1. Mission Church

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

a. A constitution has been written to define and govern the mission work.
   i. The mother church approves the constitution and doctrinal standards of the mission church (which may or may not be identical to the mother church's).
   ii. The mother church appoints a session *pro tempore* over the mission church.
   iii. These actions put the mission church into existence.

b. Under this constitution and session *pro tempore*:

i. New members can be received.

ii. The mission's constitution may be modified by its own amendment process.

iii. New officers may be examined, ordained and installed.

2. The Session

   a. The session *pro tempore* of the mission church shall be composed of all or some designated part of the session of the mother church along with any duly elected and installed pastors/elders of the mission church until the rest of the conditions for particularization have been fulfilled.

   b. The session *pro tempore* shall not be the session of the mother church, but only the session of the mission church.

   c. Upon the particularization of a church, the pastors/elders from the mother church who had been assigned to serve *pro tempore* on the mission church's session shall no longer necessarily be members of the new session. However, they may continue to serve as *pro tempore* elders should the new church deem it useful.

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

3. Conditions for Particularization

   a. The mission church shall have its own constitution and bylaws. The sponsor church shall submit the constitution and/or bylaws of their new church to the presbytery no later than 45 days prior to the stated meeting of the presbytery, for inclusion on the agenda of that meeting.

   b. The mission church shall have been formally constituted for not less than two years.

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

   d. The mother church may require other conditions.

   e. The session of the mother church has formally acknowledged that conditions for particularization (a-d above)

have been met.

f. Presbytery acknowledges that conditions a-e above have been met, and does so by receiving the mission church into presbytery membership.

4. Relationship to the CREC
   a. All mission churches of CREC member churches shall automatically have mission status in the CREC.
   b. This mission status may be maintained until the mission is particularized.
   c. Once conditions are met for particularization, the mission church shall be eligible for full CREC membership at the next CREC presbytery meeting.
   d. As extensions of a member CREC church, all mission churches shall meet the constitutional and doctrinal requirements of the CREC.
   e. As extensions of a member CREC church, all mission churches shall have the protection of the CREC courts and other CREC constitutional protections and requirements.
5. Ordination of Teaching and Ruling Elders
   a. As the daughter church is under the oversight of the mother church (a CREC member), all ordination exams shall be conducted under the oversight of the mother church and according to CREC guidelines.
   b. The actual ordination and installation of officers shall be conducted under the oversight of the mission church session *pro tempore*.
6. Termination of Relationship
   a. Termination of the relationship between mother and daughter church can happen in two ways:
      i. The daughter church becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership;
      ii. A decision by the mother church's session to terminate the relationship.
7. Visits
   a. It is recommended that representatives of the mother church visit the mission church on a regular basis (perhaps

quarterly), sometimes to conduct meetings or worship, and sometimes to observe.

b. It is also recommended that the mission church cover the expenses of the mother church (e.g., travel and honorarium).

Article V. CREC Guided Church Plant

A. Purpose

When a group wishes to attempt to plant a church in a new location and cannot find a sponsoring church under our "mission church" guidelines, that group may seek to establish a voluntary "pastoral council." The "pastoral council" would consist of at least three men, two of which must be from the Presbytery where the church is located, current CREC pastors/elders who agree to offer counsel and guidance to the group.

B. Definitions

1. A CREC Guided Church Plant: is an informal group of families and individuals who are exploring the possibility of establishing a church and who might culminate in constituting an independent church with the intent of becoming a particularized church in the CREC.
2. Particularized church: a constituted body of Christians who have met all the criteria established by this policy to become a separate church governed by its own session and received into the CREC as full members.

C. Procedure

1. CREC Guided Church Plant: A church shall be considered a CREC Guided Church Plant when the following conditions have been met:
   a. A "pastoral council" of three or more CREC pastors/elders has formally agreed to sit on the pastoral council. They should vet the group, provide advice, give guidance, and report annually to Presbytery.
   b. A constitution has been written to define and govern the church plant work.
   c. The local presbytery has approved the church plant.

2. Conditions for Particularization
    a. The church plant shall have its own constitution and by-laws.
    b. The church plant shall have been formally constituted for not less than two years.
    c. The church plant shall have at least two pastors/elders.
    d. The church plant must then start the "candidate church" process as contained in the CREC Book of Procedures.
3. Relationship to the CREC
    a. CREC Guided Church Plants have an associate status with the CREC, as long as the above conditions are met, the pastoral counsel is maintained, and the local presbytery has approved.
    b. Delegates from these church plants may attend presbytery meetings as visitors.
4. Termination of Relationship

    Termination of the associate relationship between the CREC and the church plant can happen in four ways:

    a. The church plant becomes particularized, defined by being received into CREC membership.
    b. A decision by the established "pastoral counsel" to terminate the relationship.
    c. A decision by the church plant to terminate the relationship with the CREC.
    d. A vote of the presbytery to terminate the relationship.

Article VI. Election of Presiding Ministers

A. All nominations for the position of Presiding Minister should be pre-posted on the agenda. Churches wishing to nominate candidates for the position of Presiding Minister or Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall submit their nominations to the Presiding Minister at least thirty days in advance of the opening of the meeting.

B. Following the election of a Presiding Minister, the delegates may nominate candidates for the office of Presiding Minister *pro tempore*. The nominees need not be limited to the delegates nominated for the office of Presiding Minister.

C. The Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore* shall be elected according to the procedure delineated in Article IV.C of the CREC Constitution.

D. Election of Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister *pro tempore*

   1. If there are no nominations pre-posted on the agenda, the Presiding Minister shall receive nominations from the floor from any delegate in order to create a roster of candidates.

   2. In order for a nominee to be recognized as a candidate his nomination must be seconded on the floor and the nominee must express his consent to be a candidate. The nomination and second may not come from two delegates representing the same church.

   3. In due time, the Presiding Minister will close the nominations and identify the candidates. A motion from the floor to close nominations shall require a two-thirds vote.

   4. The Presiding Minister will open discussion about the candidates. Delegates may use this time to ask questions of the candidates or elicit statements from them. Delegates also may speak for or against any candidate.

   5. A roll call vote will be taken unless by majority vote or at the Presiding Minister's discretion, a vote by ballot is requested. The candidate receiving a majority of votes will be elected Presiding Minister. The outgoing Presiding Minister will tally the votes and then shall declare the results of the election.

   6. If there is only one candidate, he must receive at least a two-thirds majority of the assembled delegate votes to fill the posi-

tion of Presiding Minister. In elections with more than one candidate, a candidate must receive the votes of more than 50% of the delegates present and voting to become Presiding Minister-elect. If no candidate meets this requirement, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and another vote taken. In the event of a tie vote between two candidates, the Presiding Minister will break the tie, if necessary, to elect a Presiding Minister or eliminate a candidate from the ballot.

Article VII. Conduct of Meetings

A. The official language of the broader assemblies of the CREC will be English.

B. All meetings will be conducted in English.

C. Any non-English speaking delegates to Presbytery or Church Council must be accompanied by an interpreter.

D. Robert's Rules of Order exist to facilitate the decision-making process at meetings. They help ensure that discussion is clear and that the rights of both the majority and the minority are protected. Before each meeting, the Presiding Minister shall distribute the summary of some of the basic rules, redacted from Robert's Rules and set forth in Appendix A, which will familiarize all attendees with them and help our meetings run more smoothly and keep discussion on track.

Article VIII. Formation of New Presbyteries

A. Specifications

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

B. Provisional Presbyteries

1. Creating a Provisional Presbytery

   A CREC Presbytery, by majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting, may create a Provisional Presbytery for the purpose of preparing a group of churches for eventual establishment as a separate Presbytery within the CREC. This group may consist of churches from within the parent Presbytery or from multiple Presbyteries, provided there is mutual agreement among all involved Presbyteries. The parent Presbytery should normally be the Presbytery with the most churches in the Provisional Presbytery.

2. Provisional Presbytery—Powers and Restrictions

   a. A Provisional Presbytery shall have the following powers:

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

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

      iii. To appoint *ad hoc* committees;

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

      v. To evaluate candidates for ordination and to make recommendations to local churches regarding ordination. Examination results and the recommendations therefrom shall be reported to the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery within 30 days of the conclusion of the procedure;

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

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

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

CREC church, or with a non-CREC church.

b. A Provisional Presbytery is restricted from performing the following activities:
   i. Electing and sending delegates to the CREC Council;
   ii. Amending the governing documents of the parent Presbytery, except that a Provisional Presbytery may formulate proposed amendments to either the parent Presbytery's or the CREC's governing documents for consideration by the parent Presbytery at a properly called meeting of the entire presbytery;
   iii. Addressing in formal (judicial) action matters referred to them by the Session of a member church or by another CREC broader assembly;
   iv. Admit new churches into membership;
   v. Mediate in disputes between a member church and a broader assembly of the CREC;
   vi. Require mediation or non-binding arbitration in any situation that may arise in a member church;
   vii. Censure or expel a member church or a CREC official.

3. Consultation

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

4. Representation from Presbytery

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

5. Language restrictions

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

VI.

6. Tenure of a Provisional Presbytery

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

7. Delegates and membership

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

8. Termination of a Provisional Presbytery

   a. A Provisional Presbytery is disbanded automatically, along with all restrictions thereon, immediately upon its approval by the CREC Council as a fully constituted Presbytery of the CREC;

   b. A Provisional Presbytery, upon a majority vote of its members, may file a formal request to be disbanded by the parent Presbytery at any time. If such a formal request is received by the Presiding Minister of the parent Presbytery, he may call an *ad hoc* meeting of Presbytery to consider the matter, or he may defer action until the next regularly scheduled Stated Meeting of Presbytery, at his sole discretion. A simple majority vote of Presbytery is required to disband a Provisional Presbytery.

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

Article IX. Notification of Presiding Ministers

A. The session of elders of each CREC church shall notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery under the following circumstances:

   1. Before formally admonishing a minister (pastor) or elder (formal admonishment consists of an act of the session, entered into the minutes and delivered to the minister or elder verbally or in writing).

   2. Before dismissing a minister (pastor) or elder or calling for his resignation.

   3. Upon any instance of divorce, marital separation, or excommunication (or similar public scandal that implicates the reputation of the broader assembly) in a minister's or elder's household.

B. Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall report to the Presiding Minister of Council the same information.

Article X. Judicial Proceedings Before the Broader Assemblies

A. General Procedures for Judicial Cases

   1. When a judicial case comes before a broader assembly, the assembly acts as a judicatory. The judicatory through its presiding minister may form a judicial committee to see a case through its due process as outlined in these procedures. Accordingly, a judicatory ordinarily manages judicial cases through its presiding minister and/or the chair of a judicial committee. A judicial committee hears the presentation of evidence and witnesses, deliberates, and reports its findings and recommendations to the full broader assembly for final action.

   2. The presiding minister of a judicatory may form a judicial committee at any point in steps numbered 3 through 7 below, as the particulars of the case warrant. A judicial committee shall be composed of at least three elders or ministers representing at least three different CREC churches, and with no more than two representatives from any one church. Further, committee members shall have no conflicts of interest in the case.

3. Judicial cases may come before a broader assembly in the form of referrals, appeals, or complaints, as provided for in the CREC Constitution. An aggrieved party (e.g., a plaintiff or an appellant) initiates a judicial case by notifying both the defendant and the appropriate judicatory (through its presiding minister) of their intent to appeal or complain. They shall provide this notice within four weeks of the decision they are appealing or the action about which they are complaining.
4. The aggrieved party shall follow this notice with an orderly charge and petition, in writing, within a reasonable timeframe as prescribed by the judicatory.
    a. A charge is in order if (i) it alleges a biblically-defined offense (or offenses); (ii) it clearly identifies an offender, the defendant party; and (iii) it alleges specific acts or omissions that are capable of being either confirmed or disconfirmed through competent evidence and/or witness testimony.
    b. If a charge (or charges) entail multiple elements, the elements shall be parsed so that each element can be considered individually as well as corporately. Note: ultimately, the judicatory shall rule individually on each element, as appropriate, as well as ruling on the totality of the case.
    c. A petition is in order if it proposes a remedy that is consistent with scripture and the governing standards of the CREC. Note: A judicatory is not bound by a party's proposed petition for relief. Ultimately, it may grant or deny a petition in whole or in part, or it may substitute its own judgment as to the appropriate relief in the case.
5. If the charge and petition appear to be in order, and if the defendant has not already supplied a written response to the charge, the judicatory shall demand such written response within a reasonable timeframe.
6. The judicatory, after considering the defendant's response, shall make a final determination as to whether the charges and petition are in order.
7. If the charges and petition are in order, the judicatory shall assume jurisdiction in the case and proceed. Once a judicatory assumes jurisdiction in a case, the proceedings can be halted

only by action of the judicatory. Neither of the parties in the case may halt the proceedings by their own unilateral action.

8. A judicial committee proceeds by conducting a trial or hearing for the orderly presentation of testimony and evidence (per B below), then by deliberating and preparing a written report of its findings and recommendations, and finally, by presenting that report to the broader assembly. Along the way, the judicial committee chair, in consultation with the presiding minister, shall facilitate the supporting communication and logistics that attend such proceedings. At any point in the proceedings a judicatory (or its judicial committee) may, at its discretion, seek advice from wise officers within the CREC on questions about procedures and standards.
9. Parties shall comply with deadlines set by a judicatory (acting through either its presiding minister or its judicial committee). A judicatory's ultimate findings may not be set at jeopardy because of a party's failure to provide requested materials in a timely manner.
10. A central objective in all judicial proceedings is to reconcile the parties. If and when reconciliation occurs, the judicatory may deem it unnecessary to advance the case through a full process.
11. When a judicial committee is ready to report its findings and recommendations to the full broader assembly, the full assembly shall act on the report promptly. This may require an *ad hoc* meeting of the assembly.

B. Trials or Hearings

1. A judicatory ordinarily conducts hearings through a judicial committee as provided above. This section addresses the procedures for a trial or hearing. In this section, the term Plaintiff refers to the aggrieved party who introduced the appeal or complaint.
2. Ordinarily, a judicial hearing may be observed by any member in good standing of a CREC church. But if the case involves sensitive evidence and testimony, the committee may determine to conduct some or all of the hearing in executive session.
3. Prior to the hearing, the Plaintiff's charge and petition, and the Defendant's response, shall be published to the members of the judicial committee.

4. Prior to the hearing, each party must disclose any exhibits and the names of any witnesses to the judicial committee and also to the opposing party. The committee shall schedule the hearing within a timeframe that allows the parties sufficient time to prepare while also serving the speedy execution of justice.
5. Conduct of the hearing itself
    a. Introduction to the case
        i. The chair (or his designee) opens the hearing with prayer, and then charges the parties, the witnesses, and the committee members from the Scriptures.
        ii. The chair invites the Plaintiff to introduce the matter.
        iii. The chair invites the Defendant to introduce the matter.
    b. Presentation of the Plaintiff's case.
        i. The Plaintiff calls a witness and directs him by questioning. The committee members may follow up with questions of their own.
        ii. The Defendant may cross-examine the Plaintiff's witness. The committee members may follow up with questions of their own.
        iii. If the Plaintiff wishes to redirect the witness, he may do so, but the same opportunities will be given for cross-examination by the Defendant and follow-up questions from committee members.
        iv. The Plaintiff may then call additional witnesses, eliciting testimony as described above. The Plaintiff may also present documentary or physical evidence during the course of his presentation.
        v. When the Plaintiff concludes his presentation, the committee members may pose final questions to the Plaintiff or to any of his witnesses.
    c. Following the Plaintiff's presentation, any member of the committee may interject a motion to dismiss the case. If the motion carries by a three-fourths majority (or unanimously if only three members comprise the committee), the hearing will end and the matter will be regarded as settled.
    d. Presentation of Defendant's case. Defendant's presentation is patterned after the Plaintiff's presentation as described

above.

e. At this point the chair shall invite committee members to ask any final questions of any available witness.

f. The chair shall invite both parties to present their summary and argument, in this order: first the Plaintiff, then the Defendant, and finishing with the Plaintiff's rebuttal.

g. The chair or his designee shall close the hearing in prayer and dismiss the parties and witnesses.

6. Following the hearing, the committee shall deliberate in executive session

   a. Deliberation shall begin with a prayer.

   b. The committee shall render judgment by a simple majority vote. It shall prepare a report that includes its judgment on both the charge and the petition, together with a synopsis of relevant findings of fact.

   c. Committee members voting in the minority may prepare a minority report. The minority report must be included with the majority report as the report of the committee.

7. The committee shall submit its written report to the judicatory

Article XI. Ordination in the CREC

Preface

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

and temperament, combined with the presbytery's positive evaluation of the man's knowledge and doctrinal soundness come together, only then should the man be ordained to the gospel ministry. While the CREC permits a variety of views of the offices, the ministerial ordination process stands in the mainstream of the Church's orthopraxy. The Church has historically recognized an ordained class of stewards serving the household of God (Titus 1:7). The New Testament speaks of "pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11) who were set apart for service. For example, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14, Authorized Version). The New Testament speaks of "servants" or "ministers" of the Church (diakonos) such as Paul, Timothy, Epaphras, and Tychicus (Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:7). While the New Testament uses the term "elder" synonymously with "bishop" or "overseer" and both of these "pastor" (Acts 20:17-28), this class of officers includes distinctions of those who "rule" and those who "labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:17-4:2). For example, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17, Authorized Version). Ministers of the Word represent the Lord in proclaiming His will in the public preaching of the Word and in leading in the administration of the sacraments. Reformed congregations have often recognized three types of pastoral call, requiring ordination examination: Pastor, Associate Pastor, and Assistant Pastor. Those called as Pastors and Associate Pastors are affirmed or elected by the congregation in the same process as other elders (see Constitution Article II.D) and are voting members of the session of elders. Those appointed as Assistant Pastors are appointed by the session of elders, rather than the congregation and are not members of the session.

A. The Nature of Ordination

1. The ordination of a pastor or minister is the act of conferring and confirming ministerial gifts (1 Tim. 4:14). The "laying on of hands" imparts a spiritual gift for ministerial service (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). The process implies the evaluation of qualifications and competencies for ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Eph. 4:11). The pattern established in the Scriptures is that the minister is to commit the faith to faithful men who will teach others and so pass on the faith and build up the Church (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

2. The presbytery examination process is designed to evaluate the

ministerial competence of the candidate through direct examination and the testimony of the congregation(s) in which the candidate received training (i.e., internship). A minister ordained to serve God's flock must possess the necessary character and skills along with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in the Scriptures in order to adequately fulfill his calling. He must be able to feed Christ's sheep (John 21:15-17), convict those who oppose the faith (2 Tim. 2:24-26), shepherd God's people (1 Pet. 5:1-4), and make a good confession before men (1 Tim. 6:12).

3. The examination process is intentionally demanding. When a candidate has passed the examination, the value of the ordination is increased for everyone involved. When a man is examined and approved by the broader church, several benefits flow from that process that will better equip him for his public life of service to Christ and His Church. This process seeks to protect the Church by holding back those who are not sufficiently gifted, called, and trained to shepherd God's people. When a presbytery approves a man, it inspires confidence in the candidate, in the local church, in the broader church, and in those outside the Church.

B. Ministerial Examination, Ordination, Installation, and Call

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

1. The process of examination is facilitated through an ordination examination committee (hereafter, "committee") ordinar-

ily composed of five, but no less than three CREC elders with a majority of members being ordained ministers. The same committee may serve for multiple men within a set period of time (e.g., for one year as an *ad hoc* committee).

2. A congregation wishing to call a previously un-ordained man should have the candidate successfully complete the presbytery examination process before assuming pastoral duties. This examination may take place in the sending presbytery (in which the candidate is located) or the receiving presbytery (to which the candidate is being called). Exceptions to this requirement may be authorized by the presbytery by direct action or through the presiding minister (Constitution IV.A.2.g and IV.C.7).
3. A candidate may begin to undergo the examination process prior to a call from a congregation so as to commend the man for consideration in CREC congregations. A candidate undergoing examination prior to a call may not be examined on the floor of presbytery, nor ordained until he has accepted a call. A successful candidate who has been approved prior to a call is a "licentiate." He is licensed by a representative committee of presbytery to preach, teach, and minister under the authority of the local session. Presbyteries are to accept such approved examinations of other (CREC) presbyteries with regard to the fitness of a candidate and knowledge but may examine a candidate with regard to his views. Exceptions may be authorized by the presbytery by direct action or through the presiding minister (Constitution IV.A.2.g and IV.C.7).
4. When a candidate is being called to a congregation, the presbytery should inquire of the local session as to the adequacy of the candidate's compensation package (salary, housing, insurance, etc.) and make recommendations to the local congregation, if needed. The committee should also inquire on matters relating to taxation and benefits, such as a non-taxable "housing allowance" and advise the candidate and church.

C. Examination Materials, Specifications, and Details

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

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

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

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

E. Previously Ordained Men Entering the CREC

1. The CREC accepts the ordination of ministers outside of the CREC, because we believe in the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Yet, it is both wise and proper for those previously ordained to have their credentials examined. The aim in examining a transferring minister is to assist the local congregation in confirming orthodoxy and competence.

2. When the church desires to call a man to the office of pastor who was ordained outside of the CREC or who is not a minister in the CREC, the elders of the church should inform the Presiding Minister. The Presiding Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination by appointing a commission (acting on behalf of presbytery) or a committee (who will report to Presbytery) composed of at least three CREC presbyters.

3. The commission will provide a report of its decision and any other recommendations to the Presiding Minister of the Presbytery and to the elders of the local congregation. If the commission recommends the call of the minister, the church may proceed with the call. At the next Presbytery, the minister will then be received into the CREC as an ordained minister with a report from the commission and an opportunity for a brief examination (on views) on the floor of the presbytery meeting. If the session determines to proceed with the call against the recommendation of the commission, then the session is to indicate in writing to the Presiding Minister their reasons for disregarding the recommendation. The Presiding Minister will, in that case, evaluate the criteria of the session to see if there is egregious sin involved on the part of the session, and may proceed as per Article IV.D.3.

Article XII. Recognition of Ordained Ministers

A. Each Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall establish and maintain a list of the CREC ministers (pastors) in his presbytery.

B. The purpose of the lists of CREC ministers is simply to clarify who is formally recognized as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel in the CREC. It does not mean that the man is a member of presbytery or council, or a delegate to presbytery or council. Removing a man's credentials from such a register is not equivalent to defrocking, which can only be done in the CREC at the local church level.

C. The lists shall consist of the names of: (a) ordained pastors recorded in the church reports adopted by presbytery, (b) other ministerial changes that take place at presbytery, and (c) any changes of pastoral status registered in writing with the Presiding Minister between the annual presbytery meetings. To this end:

   1. Each church shall provide a written report to presbytery at the appointed yearly meeting which includes the names of each of the ordained pastors, as well as any ordained pastor without call that is recognized by that church.

   2. The Presiding Minister of presbytery shall automatically add or remove from the list of recognized ordained men those changes which take place at presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:

      a. a previously ordained man, who has had his ordination formally recognized by presbytery upon entering the CREC along with his church;

      b. any church removed from the CREC will have the names of its ordained officers removed from the list.

   3. A church shall register all changes of pastoral status between presbytery meetings with the Presiding Minister of presbytery. This includes but is not limited to:

      a. any man who sat for a CREC ordination exam and was recommended by the examination committee, ordained by his local CREC church, and installed as a minister;

      b. any previously ordained man, who was called by a CREC member church to be her minister, and is duly installed;

      c. any minister who was defrocked;

d. any minister without call who is a member of a local CREC church that the local church wants to recognize as a lawfully ordained minister.

D. Ministers without call whose ordinations are maintained by the CREC must be members of a CREC church.

1. A church, before receiving an ordained (but uninstalled) minister into membership, is under obligation to either approve or not approve the minister's credentials. The normal expectation is that a church will approve of a minister's credentials.

a. In the case that a minister's credentials are not approved the minister may:

i. Pursue membership in another local church, or

ii. Submit to membership and so be released from his ministerial status by demitting (resigning) his office.

b. If a minister's credentials are approved the local church must:

i. Indicate the minister's status to the Presiding Minister of Presbytery

ii. Approve or not approve any ministerial activity (e.g., performing baptisms, marriages, publishing, etc.), and

iii. Take initiative in any proceedings of discipline leading to restoration or defrocking if the minister's doctrine or life is reproachable.

2. If a CREC minister does not receive a call within three years of having his "minister without call" status first recognized, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the church that holds his credentials unless specific permission is requested by the church and received from presbytery. This permission must be sought and granted on an annual basis.

E. Ministers under the oversight of another church or presbytery who are without call and desire to become members of a CREC church while remaining concurrently under the oversight of another body, must obtain approval by presbytery according the procedure of the Constitution II.B.

F. Ministers who have served in one or more churches for at least 20 years, including at least 10 years in one or more CREC churches, and

are at least 50 years old, are eligible to retire as a minister and be recognized by their session as an honorably retired minister (pastor *emeritus*). A pastor *emeritus* shall retain all honors and privileges associated with the ministry of Word and Sacrament. A pastor *emeritus* who is a member of a CREC congregation may, with the consent of his session, serve in any office or function in his presbytery or the council, including but not limited to serving as a delegate, serving on a committee, or serving as a presiding minister.

G. Upon request, the Presiding Minister may issue a letter to an inquiring body stating that the minister in question has been formally recognized by the CREC as a lawfully ordained minister of the gospel.

Article XIII. Sacramental Cooperation

A. The CREC is a unified communion of churches with various confessional differences. While we allow a variety of views and practices related to the sacraments (e.g., paedobaptism and credobaptism, paedocommunion and credocommunion), we seek mutual submission to one another (Eph. 5:21). Therefore, all CREC churches agree to recognize the sacramental actions of other CREC churches by accepting the baptismal and communicant status of their members, regardless of any confessional differences between the churches.

   1. All members in good standing of a CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church with their baptismal and communicant status intact, even if the receiving church would not have conferred that status themselves. All CREC churches will handle problems arising from differences in how membership is reckoned from church to church (e.g., individual vs. household) with all charity and good faith, seeking to include one another's members.

   2. Any credobaptist church in this Communion must accept the validity of baptisms administered in or accepted by another CREC church, even if it would not have performed or accepted that particular baptism. Such a church shall accept that the person is, in fact, baptized, though they might consider the baptism irregular.

   3. If a paedobaptized member or prospective member of a CREC church which has adopted the London Baptist Confession of

Faith or the Reformed Evangelical Confession holds or comes to credobaptist convictions and desires to be baptized upon profession of faith, then, out of respect for the political primacy of the local congregation (Const. III.A), and as an act of mutual submission (BOP XIII.A), the congregation and minister that performs this action shall not be held to be in violation of the Sacramental Cooperation Agreement (BOP XIII). Churches that have adopted these confessional statements may not require credobaptism of CREC Members for membership or admission to the Lord's Table, and no minister may be required to perform such against their conscience.

4. Any paedobaptist and credocommunion church (defined as having both communicant and non-communicant members, where non-communicants become communicants after the session accepts their profession of faith as credible), shall agree to accept the communicant status conferred by other CREC churches upon their members. Therefore, the credocommunion churches shall agree to accept transfers of members in good standing from other CREC churches and will honor and accept the communicant status they held in their sister church, regardless of age or mental capacity, by transferring them as communicant members.

   Members in good standing of one CREC church shall be received by transfer to another CREC church, with their baptismal and communicant status intact, regardless of confessional differences. However, once a member has transferred, the receiving church is not under obligation to deviate from its regular practice if children are subsequently born to the member. Any new admission to baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be done according to the church's normal practice.

Proposed Language for churches entering under the 1689:

> "As a church that subscribes to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, we believe, teach, and practice that 'those who personally profess repentance toward God and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of baptism,' and that 'immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary for this ordinance to be administered properly.' Nevertheless, in keeping with our historic Reformed Baptist heritage, we will accept infant baptisms and baptisms performed through sprinkling or pouring as valid baptisms for the purposes of membership in the local church and communicant status at the Lord's Table."

Article XIV. Formal, Non-Binding Fraternal Relations

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

Article XV. Miscellaneous Provisions

A. Emblem

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

[CREC Emblem]

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

B. Harmony of Books of Procedure

Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall submit to the Presiding Minister of Council, at least six months prior to the next regular Council meeting, a list of any changes to their Presbytery Book of Procedures

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

C. Translation of documents

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

D. Electronic Communications

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

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

Moderator

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

Main Motion

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

Order

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

Amendments

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

Point of Order

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

Point of Privilege

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

Challenge the Moderator

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

Point of Information

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

Table

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

Previous Question

If a delegate feels that further debate is unproductive he may make a motion for the "previous question," requesting the debate be ended and that the vote be taken on the main motion(s) before the presbytery. If there is no objection, the meeting proceeds to the main motion(s). If there is objection then there must be a second to the motion for the previous question and the meeting must vote on whether to end debate. This vote requires a two-thirds majority to pass, and is non-debatable. If the "call" passes, a vote on the main motion is immediately taken, without any further debate. A motion such as "I call for [or "call"] the question" or "I move we vote now" is simply a motion for the Previous Question made in nonstandard term. Care should be taken that failure to understand this fact does not lead to violation of members' rights of debate. Sometimes the mere making of a motion for the Previous Question or "call for the question" may motivate unanimous consent to ending debate. Before or after such a motion has been seconded, the chair may ask if there is any objection to closing debate. If any member objects, he should ask if there is a second to the motion or call; or, if it has already been seconded, he must immediately take a vote on whether to order the Previous Question. But regardless of the wording a motion or "call" seeking to close debate, it always requires a second and a two-thirds vote, taken separately from and before the vote(s) on the motion(s) to which it is applied, to shut off debate against the will of even one member who wishes to speak and has not exhausted his right to debate.

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

Rescind

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

Reconsider

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

Suspension of the Rules

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

Adjourn

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

Refer or Commit

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

Minutes

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

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

Appendix B. Ministerial Examination, Ordination, and Related Matters

A. Pastoral Training and Internship

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

B. Application for Ordination

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

1. Personal Statement
    a. Do you affirm that the Bible (original autographs) is inspired by God and free from errors?
    b. Do you affirm the Nicene Creed and the Definition of Chalcedon without any reservations?
    c. Which Confession of the faith best defines your views? Please briefly state any exceptions to that Confession.
    d. Are you willing to submit to the CREC governing documents, including submitting to your brethren of the session of your local church, the presbytery, and Council of the CREC? Please briefly state any exceptions to the CREC governing documents.
    e. Describe your marriage/family/children (if applicable).
    f. Discuss your use, if any, of pornography, illicit books, magazines, film, video, sexting, online dating for sexual purposes, online chatrooms, etc.
    g. Discuss your use, if any, of illegal drugs.
    h. Have you ever been convicted of a crime, been imprisoned, have outstanding legal matters pending, etc.? If so, explain.
    i. Have you offended other Christians to the extent that they would deny your fitness to Church office? If so, explain.

C. The Written Qualifying Examination

Instructions: This is to be proctored and overseen by a CREC church elder. It must be completed within eight hours, with as many breaks as needed and may be completed over the course of no more than three days. It is a "closed book" exam without a Bible, notes, etc. Each of these answers should be as succinct as possible and no more than two paragraphs should be written for any one answer. Note the key terms: list, outline, discuss, define, and defend. "List" requires only terms or names (e.g., list judges . . . Answer: "Sampson, Gideon,... "). "Outline" requires a structured list with biblical references (at least book and chapter). "Define" requires only a simple statement of the view or doctrine (without expressing agreement or disagreement). "Discuss" requires at least a sentence in which some definition of terms and differences are compared. "Defend" requires identifying a view and reasoning to it from Scripture.

1. Bible

a. List this section of the books of the Bible in the order (of the English Bible): _____(e.g., from Isaiah to Nahum; to be assigned).

b. List the Ten Commandments in order.

c. Discuss the circumstances of these three books _____(to be assigned, e.g., Exodus, Haggai, Philemon).

d. Briefly outline the lives of these three Old Testament figures _____(to be assigned, e.g., Abraham, Hosea, Elisha).

e. Defend your view of Genesis 1-2 (e.g., six day creation, day-age, etc.).

f. List the key themes/verses in the following five psalms _____(to be assigned).

g. List the Prophets who ministered during this era: _____(an era is to be assigned, e.g., pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic).

h. Outline the following five Old Testament books _____(to be assigned), commenting on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.

i. Outline the following five New Testament books _____(to be assigned), commenting on the theme, date, recipients, and occasion.

j. List biblical references (at least book and chapter) that address the following:

   i. eucharist
   ii. baptism
   iii. the millennium
   iv. sacrifices
   v. plagues
   vi. fishing
   vii. homosexuality
   viii. remarriage
   ix. ants
   x. tithing
   xi. dietary matters

xii. rocks

k. List biblical references you would use to explain and defend the following:
   i. the Scripture's authority
   ii. the Trinity
   iii. the Holy Spirit's work
   iv. weekly communion
   v. civil government
   vi. God's complete control
   vii. church officers
   viii. the place and purpose of mankind
   ix. covenant theology
   x. being against the LGBTQ+ movement
   xi. private property
   xii. angels

l. List biblical references that address the following:
   i. the Cultural Mandate
   ii. the Great Commission
   iii. spiritual bodies
   iv. Abrahamic Covenant
   v. second giving of the Ten Commandments
   vi. living sacrifices
   vii. one hundred fifty-three
   viii. the prodigal son
   ix. "You are the Christ"
   x. six hundred and sixty-six
   xi. a runaway slave
   xii. the destruction of the old creation

m. List the main theme of the following five New Testament chapters: _____(to be assigned).

n. Defend your view of the dating of the Gospels.

o. Give the book and the chapter location for each of these five biblical citations: _____(to be assigned, e.g., the following items).
   i. "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His

face..."

ii. "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone..."

iii. "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring..."

iv. "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this..."

v. "In the year that King Uzziah died..."

2. Bibliology and Apologetics
   a. Define textual criticism and the importance of such work to your faith and the faith of the historic Church.
   b. List two ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.
   c. Should our Old Testament be a translation from the LXX or the MT? Why?
   d. Discuss the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* and how it relates to Church councils/creeds/catechisms.
   e. Defend your view of apologetics, touching on classical/evidentialism, fideism, and presuppositionalism.
   f. Write a short paragraph on your favorite philosopher's contribution to the Christian faith.
   g. Discuss an apologetical conversation with a non-Christian and why you were persuasive or not.
3. Theology
   a. List ten of God's attributes, and identify whether they are communicable or incommunicable attributes.
   b. How is the Trinity relevant to the life of the everyday Christian?
   c. Define the economic and ontological Trinity.
   d. Defend your view of the "eternal subordination" (or not) of the Son to the Father.
   e. Discuss Christ's divinity and humanity, describing His person(s) and nature(s).
   f. Did Adam need to earn God's favor in the Garden of Eden? Why or why not.
   g. Define dispensationalism.

h. Discuss covenant theology.

i. Are the five points of Calvinism an accurate assessment of soteriology?

j. Can a "saved" person lose their salvation?

k. Is the atonement of the blessed Cross limited?

l. Define justification, including "final justification" (e.g., Rom. 2:13ff).

m. How do people grow in holiness in the Christian life?

n. What and who is Satan?

o. How many devils can dance on the head of a pin?

p. How many angels can dance on the head of a pin and why?

q. Is Satan alive and well on planet earth today?

r. Could there be self-conscious life on other planets (now)? Why or why not.

4. History, Ecclesiology, and Polity

a. Discuss the following five events/movements/figures in Church history _____(e.g., Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Wycliffe, Huss, Tyndale, Knox; to be assigned).

b. When did the Church begin?

c. Should the office of Bishop be recognized in the Church?

d. Is Apostolic Succession necessary for ordination?

e. Is every elder a pastor?

f. What office(s) may women hold in the Church?

g. Does God do miracles today, if so, what may He do?

h. Does God still speak today? Please explain.

i. List the governing documents of the CREC.

j. List the current presbyteries of the CREC.

k. Define the two broader assemblies in the CREC and how they are constituted.

l. What disciplinary measures can CREC presbyteries or the Council take?

m. Outline some important sections/views of the CREC governing documents.

n. What improvements would you offer to the CREC govern-

ing documents?

5. Worship and Sacraments
   a. Define the "regulative principle of worship."
   b. Define "covenant renewal worship."
   c. What happens to a person in baptism, i.e., is a baptized person saved?
   d. Defend your position on the recipients of baptism (infants or confessors).
   e. Defend your position on the proper recipients of the Eucharist.
   f. Defend your view of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
   g. Should congregants come forward to receive communion from Christ's representatives or receive the elements from other congregants (passing trays of individual elements)?
   h. What should precede the Eucharist in a worship service?
   i. Should worshipers ever raise their hands in a worship service?
   j. What kind of music should be used in worship?
6. Eschatology
   a. Discuss "new creation" and the future, touching on the Resurrection of believers.
   b. Is hell eternal, conscious torment or a temporary destruction?
   c. What happens to a believer at death?
   d. What happens to a believer at the Resurrection?
   e. Defend your view of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24, Mark 13, etc.).
   f. Defend your specific view of the "end times" (e.g., millennium, tribulation, rapture, etc.).
7. Ethics
   a. Should abortion ever be permitted, if so, in what circumstances?
   b. Defend your view of capital punishment.
   c. Is it ever acceptable to God to lie or deceive others, such as the case of Rahab?

d. Defend your view of divorce and remarriage.

e. Would you permit a remarried (unbiblically divorced) candidate to hold congregational office? Explain.

f. What is the best Christian response to matters surrounding climate change?

g. What is the best Christian response to the Black Lives Matter movement?

h. Discuss racism in the world and the gospel response to it.

i. Discuss your response to a church member whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with his/her birth sex.

j. Discuss your view of war and/or armed conflict, i.e., "just war."

k. What steps will you take to avoid plagiarism in ministry?

l. List the actions you would do if it was discovered that a 21-year old person (or older) in your congregation engaged in sexual activity with a person under 18 years old.

m. How will you protect your church from sexual predators?

8. Pastoral

a. Discuss your goal in preaching.

b. Outline your method in preparing to preach.

c. How long should an ordinary sermon last (in minutes) and why?

d. Who is your favorite preacher and why?

e. In one sentence, answer the question: what is the content and effect of a good sermon?

f. List the main issues in our culture today that must be addressed from the pulpit?

g. Discuss pastoral confidentiality, answering the question, "When would you call social services or the police?"

h. What would you do if a young woman and her mother scheduled a counseling session at your home office, but at the last minute the mother could not come, leaving you alone with a young woman?

i. Outline your counsel to a man regularly using online porn.

j. Outline your counsel to a woman who is same-sex attracted.

k. Outline your counsel to a husband and wife who have not engaged in sexual intercourse in more than one year.

l. Would you preside at a wedding of two people that are living together? Why/why not?

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

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

1. Five pastoral case studies _____(to be assigned—a pastoral case study is a 1000–2000 word response addressing an assigned pastoral problem or situation, such as the example below).

Sample Pastoral Case Study

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

Case Study Response: What issues need to be addressed? How does this behavior comport with the biblical standards for a deacon? Is he behaving sinfully in any way? What passages of Scripture would guide your thinking in this situation? What process would you use to address this (go to session, go first privately, investigate with certain disaffected individuals first, etc.)?

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

3. Exegetical Papers—The candidate should provide two exegetical papers (one from the Old Testament, one from the New Tes-

tament), assigned by the committee. The assigned papers are limited to no more than five verses. The committee may permit the candidate to submit previously written work conforming to the guidelines below.

E. Required Guidelines for an Exegetical Paper

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

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

F. Sample Questions for Oral Examination

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

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

2. An atheist friend whose wife of 20 years just died of cancer confronts you: "If God is good and all powerful, why do bad things happen? If He's all-powerful, He could stop them from happening. If He's good, He wouldn't want them to happen. . .

." How would you respond?

3. After a Sunday School class discussion of the Trinity, one of your members says, "I've always found that stuff about the Trinity so confusing. I guess that's what the Bible teaches. But I have some good friends at work who are Muslim and Jewish. Sometimes we even pray together. I believe in the Trinity, I guess, but is it really that important?" How would you respond?
4. You get into a discussion with a fellow pastor in your community. He's surprised to hear that you believe in a substitutionary atonement. "God torturing His Son is cosmic child abuse. Besides, if God wants to forgive us, He can just forgive us. He doesn't need to kill Jesus to do that." How would you respond?
5. After a sermon on the danger of apostasy, a person asks. "Are you saying that we can lose our salvation? I thought you held to the perseverance of the saints?" How would you respond?
6. A college student returns for a summer break after taking a "religion" class at a state university. When you reach out to her she has serious concerns about the Bible. She asks, "Why don't you talk about all the other Gospels and not just Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?"

G. Recommended Ordination Vows

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

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and Reformed faith?
3. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the tenants of this faith, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your session and presbytery the change which has taken place in your views?
4. Do you promise faithfully to perform all the duties of a minister and to endeavor by the grace of God to be an example before the Church in which God has made you a minister?
5. Do you promise to submit to your brethren, including your

session and the decisions of the broader church in your presbytery and the general council of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches?

6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity, growth, and glorification of the Body of Christ and especially the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches?

H. Ministerial Declarations

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

Declaration at the ordination event by the presiding pastor or elder: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with all the elders of [congregation name]. I now pronounce and declare that [candidate's name] has been lawfully examined, approved, and duly ordained as a minister in the Church as agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the constitution of this congregation and the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches. Therefore, you are entitled to all encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

I. Exhibit: A "Call" Document

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

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

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

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

Signed [_____session members or authorized representative]

Appendix C. A "Golden Rule" for Cooperation among Churches

A. Scriptural Basis

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

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

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

B. Principal Concerns

1. That we promote the unity, peace and purity of churches in the matter of their mutual involvement in the movement of members.
2. That we develop greater knowledge of, respect for and communication with these congregations and denominations in the area of their ecclesiastical discipline.
3. That we, while promoting goodwill between the churches, seek also to promote the growth and maturity of the persons involved through the positive application of church discipline.
4. That we signify our desire to discipline members by not ignoring another church's discipline, and that we believe that the judgment of officers in Christ's church may not be disregarded as though they were not acting for God in His church.
5. That we demonstrate to all that the church of Christ is one, and

that He has one law for all its parts.

6. That churches have occasionally, while perhaps unintentionally, received members and/or ordained officers who were under various stages of discipline in other churches, thus creating misunderstanding and tension between the churches.
7. That we recognize the need for mutual freedom and openness on the part of the churches.

C. The "Golden Rule" for Church Cooperation

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

1. We will be sensitive to the presence of existing churches and missions ministries of other churches and will take great care in receiving members of those existing ministries.
2. We will refrain from receiving into membership a member of another local church until we have made a good faith effort to contact the officers of the former church.
3. We shall inform churches that are being attended by those under our discipline of the nature and extent of the disciplinary procedure, thus enabling informal consultation between the pastors and/or elders of both churches.
4. We shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under disciplinary action from his former church until we have taken into serious account the discipline of and the information supplied by the former church.
5. We shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under discipline until the officers of his former church have been contacted to determine if any needed and proper restitution has been made or committed to and/or reconciliation has been seriously attempted. We shall make a good faith effort in such cases to satisfy the officers of the former church.
6. As appropriate, we shall refrain from receiving into membership a person under discipline until after he has made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the form of government of the church from which he is separating, and we shall

be responsible to see that this is done.

7. We agree that when communication and/or action regarding the movement of a member or ordained officer from one church to another does not satisfy either his former or present church officers, other local pastors or elders may be contacted, with a view to mediation of the problem.

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

Appendix D. Questionnaire for Prospective Mission and Candidate Churches

This questionnaire, or a modified version, is for use when churches and presbyteries are considering applicants for Mission or Candidate churches.

History, Location, Demographics

1. How long has the church been in existence?
2. How many people are in attendance, and in how many households? Please distinguish between actual members and long-time visitors.
3. How many family units are unrelated by blood or marriage?
4. Where is the church located, and what is the population of the city/county?
5. How far is the church from a large population center?
6. Generally describe the church's demographics.
7. What is the financial viability of the church, and how much do you pay the pastor(s)?
8. Is there any history of controversy within your congregation? If yes, please explain.

9. Has your church sought membership in any other CREC presbytery?

Church Government

10. How many officers are in the church, and how long have they been ordained? Please list their names, ages, marital status, and number of children.
11. Were each of the officers ordained in the ritual of laying on of hands?
12. What are the academic credentials of your pastors/teaching elders, and who were they ordained by?
13. Have any of the officers been divorced? If so, please give the circumstances.
14. Have any of the officers had a child that has been excommunicated? If so, please give the circumstances.
15. How does the church handle congregational voting (individual vs. head of household, etc.), and what issues would be brought to the congregation for a vote?
16. What is the church's current confessional standards and has it ever changed confessional standards?
17. What exceptions, if any, does the church take to the confessional standards?
18. What exceptions, if any, do the pastor(s) hold beyond what the church holds?

Liturgy, Sacraments, Music

19. Please describe your order of service (liturgy) and its main elements.
20. What is the church's position on children and the sacraments (paedo vs. credo), and are all of the officers in agreement?
21. How do you distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, and how often do you celebrate it?
22. What type of music do you use in your worship service (psalms, hymns, praise music)?

Reputation with Outsiders

23. Was your church part of another church in the past and if so, what happened?
24. Are there other churches in your community that might view your church negatively? If yes, please explain.
25. Do you believe your church has a good reputation with the general public/unbelievers? If no, please explain.

Interest in the CREC

26. Describe your interest in being a CREC church. What do your officers like about the CREC and who in the CREC are their biggest influences?
27. Are there any personalities outside of the CREC (on social media and podcasts) that have an influence on your officers or laypeople? Please list.

Distinctives

28. Explain the position of your session on the following topics:

    Six-Day Creationism

    Eschatology

    Charismatic gifts

    Patriarchy

    Head-coverings

    Civil government and Nationalism

    Kinism and interracial marriage