

Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy

ORDINATION STANDARDS & EXAMINATION PRACTICES

Adopted as amended 10/4/2007

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BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2006, the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted the recommendations of the *Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church*. Among its recommendations, two in particular address the manner in which governing bodies should seek to make decisions. First, “that we engage... in processes of intensive discernment through worship, community building, study, and collaborative work”; and second, that we “explore the use of alternative forms of discernment preliminary to decision making, especially in dealing with potentially divisive issues.”

The General Assembly further adopted an Authoritative Interpretation which we have sought to use as a background in our work of discernment around ordination and examination practices. It includes:

1. *The Book of Confessions* and the Form of Government of the *Book of Order* set forth the scriptural and constitutional standards for ordination and installation.
2. These standards are determined by the whole church, after the careful study of Scripture and theology, solely by the constitutional process of approval by the General Assembly with the approval of the presbyteries. These standards may be interpreted by the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission.
3. Ordaining and installing bodies, acting as corporate expressions of the church, have the responsibility to determine their membership by applying these standards to those elected to office. These determinations include:
 - a. Whether the candidate being examined for ordination and/or installation as elder, deacon, or minister of Word and Sacrament has departed from scriptural and constitutional standards for fitness for office.
 - b. Whether any departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108 of the *Book of Order*, thus barring the candidate from ordination and/or installation.
4. Whether the examinations and the ordination and installation decision comply with the constitution of the PCUSA, and whether the ordaining/installing body has conducted its examination reasonably, responsibly, prayerfully, and deliberately in deciding to ordain a candidate for church office is subject to review by higher governing bodies.

To address these tasks, a task force consisting of members from the *Committee on Ministry* (COM), the *Committee on Preparation for Ministry* (CPM), the *Leadership in Ministry Team* (LIM), and representatives from the *Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery* staff began its work in October of 2006. The desire to engage in this work was fostered by the LIM in response to an initiative from both COM and CPM. The representatives of the task force were:

Rev. Chris James (LIM)	Rev. Renita-Mercado Heinzl (COM)
Rev. Dieter Heinzl, Ph.D. (Facilitator, LIM)	Rev. Dr. Chris Keating (COM)
Rev. Mark Bradshaw-Miller (CPM)	Rev. Elizabeth Kanerva (COM)
Roger Relfe (CPM)	Rev. Dr. Paul Reiter (Presbytery Staff)
Steve Collier (CPM)	Rev. Susan Niesen (Presbytery Staff)
Gretchen Houston (COM)	

PREAMBLE

The goal of the task force was to put before the presbytery, prayerfully and respectfully, a working document for its consideration which strived toward enabling us together to do the following:

- 1) to engage in and practice a process of discernment as proposed by the denominational task force which produced the PUP report for all our presbyteries' consideration
- 2) to maintain a sustained dialog among colleagues with respect to the theological interpretation of contemporary issues based on the Scriptures (Old and New Testament), guided by the confessions as set forth in the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and lived out under the authority of God's Word through the power of God's Holy Spirit
- 3) to foster a climate of mutual forbearance
- 4) to respect each others' differing theological viewpoints and listen to each other's deep concerns regarding the Christian faith and its practice in active discipleship
- 5) to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)
- 6) to honor the process of the PCUSA to do things decently and in order
- 7) to interpret clearly and abide by the process of ordination and installation of officers in the PCUSA as set forth in the Book of Order (specifically, G-11.000, and G-14.000)

[The following section was deleted by action of the presbytery.]

~~* The representatives of each committee will, together with their committee, propose an even more transparent process of their responsibilities and accountability with respect to the ordination process of ministers of Word and Sacrament, the inclusion of already ordained ministers coming into this Presbytery from other presbyteries, and the training of elders and deacons in local congregations.~~

- 8) to celebrate and uphold the *Great Ends of the Church* (G-1.0200)
- 9) to affirm the *Faith of the Church catholic* (G-2.0300), the *Protestant Reformation* (G-2.0400), and the *Reformed tradition* (G-2.0500).

[The following item was inserted by action of the presbytery.]

10) to encourage questions and answers that are theologically sound and understandable to all.

We humbly acknowledge that the church of Jesus Christ is merely a "provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity (G-3.0200)." As such, we need to acknowledge that the church always was, is, and will be imperfect and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). However, the church is also and always called to be "a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ, the new reality revealed in Jesus Christ ..., a new creation, a new beginning for human life in the world (G-3.0200, a. and b.)."

Furthermore, the church is called by God to affirm itself as a "community of diversity ... providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity (G-3.0401)" revealed in Jesus Christ by the power of God's Holy Spirit. "The Church's unity in Christ," then, "enables and

requires the church to be open to all persons and to the varieties of talents and gifts of God's people The Presbyterian Church (USA) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness, leading to wholeness in its emerging life (G-4.0401, G-4.0402, G-4043)." In so doing, the PCUSA, and we as members of it, seeks to honor and imitate our Lord Jesus Christ who promised that he has come to give us and the world life, and to give us this life in abundance (John 10:10).

As ordained members of the *Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy*, we are committed to affirming the vows taken at the time of our ordination, remembering under whose authority we stand: that of Jesus Christ who alone is head of the church (G-1.0100, G-14.0801 g, 1.) and whom we trust and obey both in life as well as in death (*The Theological Declaration of Barmen* 8:11; also, cf. *The Heidelberg Catechism* 4.001). We acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures (Old and New Testament) to be Christ's authoritative witness by the power of God's Holy Spirit (G-14.0801 g, 2), and "receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe (G-14.0801 g, 3.)."

Reflection

We are aware that the *Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith* have been a point of contention, not only as of late but throughout the history of the Reformed tradition as well. The *Book of Order* does not give a definition of these tenets nor does it provide the church with a list toward what these might be. As a matter of fact, there is no consensus in the history of the Reformed tradition of what these tenets might be exactly. Instead, the *Book of Order* positively affirms some of the major doctrines of the Christian faith in general, and the Reformed tradition in particular. It lifts up the "majesty, holiness, and providence of God, who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love." Furthermore, it expands on God's sovereignty by affirming "1) the election of the people of God for service as well as for salvation, 2) Covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God, 3) faithful stewardship, 4) the recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God (G-2.0500, a, 1-4)."

The *Book of Order* does well to remind us of the Reformers' suspicion of idolatry. As John Calvin once said so poignantly, human nature "is a perpetual factory of idols (*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Book I, XI.8, p.108, Ford Lewis Battles Translation)". In the true spirit of the Reformed tradition that we are a church reformed and always in the process of being reformed according to God's Word, Brian Gerrish points out the dangers of defining the essential tenets of the Reformed Faith too narrowly. "The difficulty with all ... checklists ... is that they change. Or perhaps that is the good news about them. Puritan Calvinism was not Calvin's Calvinism, and the Westminster Divines were not fundamentalists. The reason why a separate Reformed church first emerged from the Reformation conflict was because no agreement could be reached between the Lutherans and the Reformed on the Lord's Supper. But there wasn't perfect agreement among the Reformed either. ... Calvin himself thought it important to acknowledge some articles of faith as necessary but did not venture to give an exhaustive list of

them. He says: such as that God is one, that Christ is God and the Son of God, and that our salvation rests on God's mercy (Brian Gerrish. "The Tradition in the Modern World: The Reformed Habit of Mind" In: *Toward The Future of Reformed Theology*. Ed. David Willis, Michael Welker. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1999. 11 ff.)".

Scruple: a definition informing the process of examinations

The unanimous decision of the Theological Consultation is to refrain from using the word "scruple" in favor of the phrase "declare disagreement in the areas of faith, polity, or practice with regard to the constitutional standards/requirements of the Presbyterian Church (USA)." The Consultation came to this conclusion for several reasons:

- 1) Nobody seems to be able to agree on what a "scruple" is.
- 2) "Scruple" is a word which made sense in its historical context (self-definition of American Presbyterianism in the 18th century) but which causes confusion in our contemporary context.
- 3) "Scruple" was a word specifically coined with respect to one's assent to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* alone (Adopting Act of 1729). As our *Book of Confessions* contains eleven (11) confessions which are regarded as standards, limiting our language to one confession only would be unconstitutional.
- 4) We are convinced that "declaring disagreement in areas of faith, polity, or practice with regard to the constitutional standards/requirements of the Presbyterian Church (USA)" is *both* a faithful rendering in the spirit of the *Adopting Act of 1729* (which actually uses quite similar language in parts) *as well as* in the spirit of the contemporary situation of our denomination. Thus, we are confident that this particular phrase honors our bedrock principle that we are a "church reformed, always being reformed according to God's Word."

It is our prayer and hope that this recommendation will move us forward with respect to our examination of candidates for ordination and installation in this presbytery and will foster a climate of open dialog among all our colleagues in ministry.

The Protocols for Examination

The Gospel relates the command of Jesus to "love one another as I have loved you." Throughout the history of the church, we have been challenged as Christians to live together in such a way that our love for our Lord, for each other, and for God's world demonstrates the blessings of the gospel. We are called within community to lives marked by patience, humility, and gentleness. It is the hope of the Theological Consultation that the processes set forward in this document will lay a foundation for practices of examination that are infused with such a spirit.

Examination presents an opportunity in the life of the governing body, not only to invite an individual to offer a witness to the gift of faith but also to encourage the faith of all. The first letter of Peter exhorts believers, "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (I

Peter 3.15-16a). While it has been appropriate throughout the history of the church to test those who would be ordained to office, it is hoped that—even at a juncture in our history where passions run high with regard to matters of belief and practice—the clarity of the processes laid out for the presbytery’s approval will invite the body to approach examination with a commitment to dialog and discernment. We seek to commit ourselves as a presbytery to processes that invite exploration of faith and of fit in a spirit of mutual forbearance and mutual respect true to our calling as a community of witness to Jesus Christ.

Such a commitment reflects

- the shared understanding of the importance of the work of examination,
- the embrace of protocols that are respectful of both our essential unity and our differences as a diverse people,
- the common agreement that questions probing the fullness of understanding of an individual’s profession of faith and perspectives on the life of the church are appropriate within the context of examination,
- the willingness to give necessary time for the examination to be satisfied,
- practices of community which respect and care for the individual, are decent and in order, build up the body of Christ, and give glory to God.

A concluding word from the Theological Consultation

This document does not make the claim of being comprehensive. Rather it understands itself to be a continued work in progress in the spirit of the Reformed affirmation that we are a church reformed which is always in the process of being reformed according to God’s Word. We also need to acknowledge that this document will only be as fruitful and helpful as the sustained, sincere, and prayerful involvement of all members of our presbytery. This document is not the task force’s document, but this presbytery’s. The task force understands itself as a mere catalyst for sustained dialog. It is our hope and prayer that all elected members of Presbytery will claim and live into one of the bedrock principles of the Reformation: the priesthood of all believers.

A Commitment to Theological Competency in Pastoral Formation Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

We believe the following is in keeping with the historic principles of the Presbyterian Church found in G-1.0300 and particularly in this work, G-1.0302.

The involvement of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) begins in consultation with Sessions as they work with individual congregants who request the Session's support and partnership in the process of preparation for ordination to the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The foundation for this process begins at the congregational level (G-14.0200 – G-14.0209 & W-4.4003), with the election and education of elders, knowledgeable of the scriptures, Book of Order and Book of Confessions of the PCUSA (G-14.0205). The involvement of the CPM culminates in the referral of the candidate for examination for ordination by the calling presbytery.

The process of taking someone under care by the presbytery, entrusted to the CPM, is to be an ongoing and growing relationship, with the CPM serving as a mentor and guide, assisting the inquirer in that person's exploration of the "calling" felt by that person, seeking confirmation and ratification of that calling. The CPM seeks to assist the inquirer, and later the candidate, if the person moves to that stage in the process, to understand the process, expectations of the individual, the CPM and the seminary. The intent is that the CPM be effective in assisting the development of the individual into the person the Lord is calling that person to become. During that journey, the CPM is called to make specific decisions at three points, each initiated by the individual and the first two with the confirmation of the Session of that person's local church.

1. Accept into Inquiry status,
2. Recommend enrollment as a Candidate,
3. Certify candidate's readiness for ministry
 - a. Follows the individual's successfully passing the ordination examinations and completing the requirements of Candidacy
 - b. Precedes permission to circulate a Personal Information Form
 - c. Affirms readiness for examination for ordination pending a call

Inquiry

Initially the CPM is required to explore certain individual issues, such as:

1. Is the person well suited for being a pastor?
 - a. Resources used to answer that question:
 - i. Psychological inventories and report.
 - ii. Field placement reports.
 - iii. Results of consultations with the CPM.
 - iv. Feedback from the educational institution.
2. What is the person's "spirituality" or spiritual life?
 - a. Resources:
 - i. Self report of the individual

- ii. Information from the church Session
 - iii. References from personal acquaintances
 - iv. Psychological inventories and report
- 3. What is the condition of the person's character?
 - a. Resources:
 - i. Self report
 - ii. Background check
 - iii. References from personal acquaintances
 - iv. Psychological inventories and report
- 4. Preliminary area of interest of service?
 - a. Resources:
 - i. Self report
 - ii. References from personal acquaintances.

Because it becomes a key component of dialog with the committee and later the presbytery, assisting the individual in developing a Statement of Faith begins at the start of the relationship between the individual and the CPM. A good place to begin and a constant question that needs to be lifted up, is: "Who is Jesus and what does He mean to you?"

Candidate

Statement of Faith Guidelines

In an attempt to clarify what we expect, we would like to see the following items addressed in the statement of faith. Eventually in one page (although initial versions may be more expansive, but eventually striving for succinctness), the statement of faith is a written statement of belief that expresses a grasp of the foundations of Christianity and the major themes (Essential Tenets) of the Reformed tradition. So, it would not be out of the question to see a belief about such things as: The Trinity, Jesus Christ, Salvation, Scripture, Sacraments and the Church. While acknowledging the importance of the individual's statement of faith as a personal declaration of belief, the CPM expects each candidate for ordained ministry to be able to defend that statement, drawing upon the resources of scripture and the Christian tradition.

Interview Questions and Examination Questions

Since no faith statement can address the fullness of the understanding of belief and grasp of the Reformed faith the questions listed in Appendix I are offered as only a guideline for an interview with the CPM for inquiry / candidacy / certification stage. These questions will be given in advance to each student. They are simply meant to begin the conversation. They can also be used as a guideline for the examination on the floor of presbytery. The list of questions should include the subjects covered by the ordination questions (W-4.4003), since those are the questions the candidates will have to answer in ordination/installation. It is also noted that a pre-set of questions can be detrimental to an adequate examination of candidates for it often discourages an ordaining body from doing helpful and necessary "follow up" to the pre-determined questions.

Expectations of the CPM

The current practice of the CPM is to require:

1. Completion of a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, the results of which enlighten both the candidate and the CPM concerning important personal skills of the candidate,
2. Classes in Presbyterian history and polity,
3. A class in reformed theology and history; as well as,
4. A basic class of foundational Christian theology.

Certification

The purpose of the certification process is to determine, through dialog (examination), the candidate's grasp of the foundations of Christianity and the major themes (Essential Tenets) of the Reformed tradition. Included in the dialog are inquiries into the candidate's understanding of the Scriptures and the constitutional documents of the PCUSA as they impact our teaching and polity (all requirements set forth in the *Book of Order* and the Manual of Preparation for Ministry as adopted by the presbytery). During the assessment, the candidate will preach for the committee and present an exegetical essay on the text and a manuscript of the sermon for CPM review.

[Section amended by presbytery – words removed are in ~~strike through~~, words inserted are in ***bold italics***]

The CPM owes the candidate and the presbytery the responsibility to do a thorough job in examining the individual prior to certifying the person ready to stand for examination by the presbytery. The CPM will provide the results of the vote by the committee to the presbytery at the time the candidate is presented for examination. During examination before the committee the candidate ***shall*** ~~may (and should)~~ be asked to declare areas of disagreement, ***if any***, in faith, polity or practice with regard to the requirements of the Constitution.

Committee on Ministry Examination Policies

Purpose of the Examination

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Ministry to examine each minister or candidate for ministry who seeks membership within the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy (G-11.0402). The purpose of these policies is to clarify the nature, direction, and reporting of these examinations within the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. The examination itself is an action of COM on behalf of the Presbytery, and is to be guided by the constitution and by Presbytery's mission of building relationships for leadership in transformational ministry. The examination serves as an introduction to the presbytery and its mission and thus serves to facilitate relationships.

All ministers seeking membership within the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy shall be examined by a team from COM. Examination for membership of pastors or candidates seeking an installed call shall be considered part of the discernment process (often referred to as "goodness of fit") and shall include a review of the person's suitability for the particular work for which they are being considered. Other ministers – those seeking a call to ministry beyond the jurisdiction of the church or those who are honorably retired – are examined for membership only. The purposes of this policy are: to preserve the connection between faith and order in the examination process, to provide a structure for conducting thorough examinations, and to clarify the process used by the Presbytery in examining ministers for membership.

Timing of Goodness of Fit Interview & Examination For Membership:

[This section amended by presbytery – words removed are in ~~striketrough~~.]

When a PNC determines that a minister is a sufficiently strong candidate to be accorded a personal interview by the whole PNC (and/or a neutral pulpit appearance), the PNC contacts the Committee on Ministry to arrange a "goodness of fit" interview and membership examination. This contact should be made as soon as possible. A church may present more than one candidate for an interview, allowing the COM to exercise its role in assisting congregations in the pastoral selection process. Reference checks and presbytery to presbytery background checks shall be completed per COM policy prior to the examination. Background checks, including verification of educational credentials and employment history, shall be ~~ordered and if possible~~, completed prior to the examination.

Prior to the Examination

Prior to the examination, each candidate or minister will present a statement of faith, a biographical statement, a Personal Information Form, and a signed application for membership in the Presbytery indicating willingness to abide by the sexual misconduct policy and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). These materials will be distributed to the team prior to the examination.

Content of The Examination

The examination will follow the guidelines of the Book of Order that address seeking membership in the presbytery (cf. G-11.0401c). The chair of the examining team shall record minutes indicating the time, date, and location of the conversation, the names of all present and their role, the questions asked and the results of the examination.

The moderator will open and close the meeting with prayer.

Each candidate for membership or ordination SHALL be asked questions in the following areas:

- One's individual journey of Christian faith;
- The understanding of theology and doctrines informing one's own theology;
- Worship and Sacraments;
- The polity of the Presbyterian Church (USA);
- The goodness of fit between the person's gift and graces for ministry and the unique needs of the calling congregation.
- Their willingness to affirm the questions for ordination/installation and ability to abide by the constitutional standards of the Presbyterian Church (USA);
[The following was added by action of the presbytery.]
- ***Any disagreements with the doctrine, polity, or practice of the Presbyterian Church (USA).***

Candidates MAY be asked questions in particular areas of doctrine, polity and practice such as:

- The Sovereignty of God
- The doctrine of the Trinity
- Christology
- Biblical and confessional authority
- Sin and salvation
- The Christian life

(These are offered as examples of areas of examination, and are not to be understood as the only important doctrines to be explored during the examination.) Sample questions will be developed by the Committee on Ministry in its handbook to facilitate complete examinations.

If a candidate or minister declares a disagreement or theological and philosophical reservation about Scripture or the constitutional standards of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the committee shall explore those areas of disagreement with the candidate, and discern whether or not there are obstacles present that would prevent the Presbytery from ordaining and/or installing the person to office. If a person declares a disagreement in the faith, polity, or practice of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the examining team SHALL ask "Will you nevertheless abide by the discipline of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the constitutional mandates of the *Book of*

Order?”

The Presbytery has no authority to ordain or install any person unwilling or unable to abide by mandatory provisions of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

At the conclusion of the examination, the candidate/minister will be excused from the room and a vote will be taken. If the examination is not sustained, the moderator will prepare a summary of the concerns voiced by the committee.

If a candidate or minister has voiced a disagreement about the faith, polity, or practice of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the examining team SHALL make record and report the matter to the entire Committee on Ministry for review and action. If the COM, after further examination and conversation with the minister or candidate, cannot determine whether the minister or candidate's disagreement would prevent him or her from being ordained or installed to office, it SHALL refer the examination to the Presbytery for its review. Throughout the process, the COM shall keep the calling congregation apprised of its actions, concerns, and procedures.

If a minister or candidate disagrees with the COM's action, she or he has the right to request an examination before the Presbytery. It is recommended that a verbatim record be kept of that examination.

Report To Presbytery

[The section was amended by presbytery – insertion is in *bold italics*.]

The result of all examinations, *including any disagreements*, shall be reported to the Presbytery. Candidates for ordination shall be presented for examination by the Presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) per presbytery policy. Ministers transferring their membership from other Presbyteries are received by action of the Committee on Ministry on behalf of Presbytery. Their statements of faith and autobiographical statements shall be included in the Committee on Ministry report to Presbytery, along with a summary of the examination.

The Role of Training and Examination for Church Officers

The final section of this report addresses an issue of great ongoing concern – the quality of preparation and examination given to those who are elected in local churches to serve as elders and deacons. It is from this group that elders are elected to serve the governing bodies of the church, including service as commissioners to presbytery, synod and General Assembly, as well as members of Presbytery’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Committee on Ministry, Committee on Representation, Permanent Judicial Commission, and others.

One of the keys to our polity is the nature of corporate governance. We take great strides to remind ourselves that there is no hierarchy in our church. We have no single bishop, rather a corporate bishop – elder and minister in partnership. If we are to take this task seriously then elders need to be equipped for their work, in the same fashion that ministers are equipped.

According to Joan S. Gray and Joyce C. Tucker in their book *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*, it is the responsibility of the session to determine if each person elected to office has the essential knowledge to serve the Presbyterian Church (USA), and to inquire about her or his personal faith and understanding of the office. (*Book of Order, G-10.0102l*)

We believe that officer training should provide for the opportunity for candidates for ordination and installation to be prepared for their examinations by engaging in preparation in four areas:

- Personal faith (conversations about one’s spiritual life)
- Theology (equipping leadership with an understanding of the doctrines of our church)
- Church Polity (equipping leadership with an understanding of the *Book of Order*)
- Duties of the Office

This training could best be provided by local congregations in the conversations at session tables around the areas of personal faith and duties of the office. Perhaps one model for training in the areas of theology and church polity might be for the presbytery to provide ongoing regional learning for elders and deacons. The development of a “Presbytery Lay Academy” could meet the ongoing leadership development and educational needs for church officers.

This task of officer development is not a task to be taken lightly since the constitutional questions asked of church officers – Elders, Deacons and Ministers of Word and Sacrament -- are the same except for questions regarding the particular functions of the office.

We believe that there is much to be done in this arena, and we will be working with the Resourcing and Equipping Team of the presbytery to further this effort.

A Final Word

The call to the priesthood of all believers reminds us of the One who has called and is continually calling the church into being: Jesus Christ, the Lord of all life and love. No matter how much we all might feel called to working in Christ's church, no matter how faithfully our committees and all of us carry out our appointed tasks, we need to remember that "faithful is the one who calls us, for he will also do it (1 Thessalonians 5:24)."

To God in Jesus Christ by the power of God's Holy Spirit be all glory and honor, both now and always. Amen.

APPENDIX I

*Sample questions developed by CPM to facilitate dialog with students
as decisions are made during the preparation process (ref. p. 8)*

What governing bodies exist in the PC (USA)?

What are the two parts of the PC (USA) constitution?

Who is head of the Church?

What are the different categories of membership in a congregation?

May a Session instruct its representatives to presbytery on how to vote?

There are those who say they are “saved.” What do they mean, and from what are they saved?

Name five confessions from the BOC and share the reason one of them was written.

What verse or part of scripture holds special meaning for you and why?

What is your understanding of the authority of scripture?

What is your understanding of grace?

What does baptism signify, and can you share your understanding of the sacrament?

What do Presbyterians mean when we say God is sovereign?

Are human beings inherently good or inherently bad? Explain.

How is Christ present in the Lord’s Supper, and can you share your understanding of the sacrament?

Why is the Trinity monotheistic?

What is your understanding of the virgin birth?

What is original sin and how does it apply to us today?

What is meant, “By grace alone, by faith alone”?

Are you able to answer all the ordination questions without exception? And if not, which ones and why not?

APPENDIX II

The Constitutional Questions for Ordination & Installation of Church Officers

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

For Ministers of Word and Sacrament:

Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament, teaching faith, and caring for people? Will you be active in government and discipline, serving in the governing bodies of the church; and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

For elders:

Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

For deacons:

Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need? In your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

RESOURCES FOR THE TRAINING OF CHURCH OFFICERS

Christian Doctrine, Revised Edition, Shirley C. Guthrie, Westminster, John Knox, 1994

Finding Christ in the Book of Order, William E. Chapman, Witherspoon Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2003

Making Disciples, Making Leaders: A Manual for Developing Church Officers, Steven P. Eason, Geneva Press, 2004

Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers, 3rd Edition, Joan S. Gray, Joyce C. Tucker, Geneva Press, 1999.

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