

The
**White
Book**

**Houston Metro Presbytery
November 13, 2023**

**Lou Veiga
Stated Clerk**

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75th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Monday, November 13, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA), 1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

Call to Order and Agenda		
Worship Service	Axel Sotelo	4:00 PM
Presbytery Called to Order	TE Arnoult	4:30 PM
Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum; Adoption of the Docket; Introductions	TE Veiga	4:35 PM
Report of the Stated Clerk	TE Veiga	4:40 PM
Report of Treasurer	RE DeBruler	4:45 PM

Reports of the Standing Committees of Houston Metro Presbytery		
Administrative Committee - no report		4:50 PM
Candidates and Credentials	TE Greco	4:50 PM
Reformed University Fellowship	RE Haaland	5:50 PM
Mission to North America	TE Wright	6:00 PM
Ministerial Relations Committee	TE Bobos	6:05 PM
Nominations Committee	RE Brister	6:15 PM
Mission to the World		6:35 PM
Report of Sessional Records	TE Blalack	6:35 PM

Meeting wrap-up and Dismissal		Time
Old Business	TBD	6:45 PM
New Business	TBD	6:45 PM
Resolution of Gratitude and Closing Prayer	TE Veiga	6:45 PM
Fellowship Meal		6:50 PM

Announcement of time and place of next meeting:
76th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Friday, January 19, 2024 at 4:00 PM
Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA)
8300 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX 77024
(713) 526-1188

**Proposed Minutes of the 73rd Stated Meeting of the
Houston Metro Presbytery
4:00 pm, Monday, March 27, 2023
Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA)
8300 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX 77024
(713) 526-1188**

The Houston Metro Presbytery met for its 73rd Stated Meeting at 4:10 PM at Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Houston, Texas.

The moderator, **TE Blake Arnoult**, excused himself from leading today. **TE Clay Holland** led in a time of joint prayer for the families of the shooting victims at Covenant Presbyterian Church and School in Nashville, TN. Presbytery enjoyed a worship service in prayer and song. Prayer was offered for our churches and our meeting with thanksgiving. **Mr. Marcelo Jakubovic** exhorted the presbytery from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:1ff. Rev. Clay Holland served as the presbytery convener in place of Mr. Arnoult; Mr. Holland opened the presbytery meeting at 4:29 pm with prayer.

Motion to elect TE Holland as moderator pro tempore and close nominations. M/S/C

After the moderator’s opening remarks, TE Holland introduced us to the facility and the house rules at Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA).

ROLL CALL AND QUORUM

TE Lou Veiga, the Stated Clerk, reported that the roll had been taken and that a quorum was present.

<u>Churches</u>	<u>Teaching Elders</u>	<u>Ruling Elder</u>
Bay Area		
Christ Church (Katy)	Fred Greco David King Curt Mire Jason Wegener	Daryl Brister David Cias
Christ Presbyterian (Hou.)	Patrick Fischl Richard Harris	Steve Bellis Travis Graham Keith Pendergrass Ken Wynne
Christ Presbyterian (Huntsville)	Nolan Williamson	Clint Allen Sam Massey

Christ the King	Clay Holland John Trapp Andrés Zelaya	
Cornerstone	Blake Arnoult	Neal Wade
Covenant/Houston	Lou Veiga	Ted Hess Jeremy Thomas
Covenant/Lufkin	Mark O'Neill	
Faith		
Grace	Kyle Bobos Bradley Wright	
Hosanna Community	Gerald Phillips	
Oaklawn		
Providence	Seth Skogen	
Redeemer Sugar Land	Kevin Arevalo Janas Caruncho	
Reformed	Mark Blalack	Ryan Bowling
Riverside	John Rieger	Eric Manthei
Southwest		Winston Dollahon David Van Voorhis
Spring Cypress	Ben Duncan	Erik Haaland Danny McDaniel

Mission Churches: Dennis Hermerding (King's Cross), Taylor Leachman (Advent)

Mission to the World:

Chaplains:

Reformed University Ministry: Brooks Harwood, Curtis Shields

Mission to North America:

Minister Laboring Out of Bounds:

Other Ministers on Roll: Jaime Jimenez, Pablo Martinez, Tim Stiemann,
Bob Schwartzbeck, Ken Thurman

Other REs present:

Other:

Under Care:

Visitors: Charles Reed, Southwest PCA; Kimmy Mota, Cornerstone; Olivia Thurman, Advent; Joshua Valdez, Christ the King; Marcelo Jakubovic, Eric Green, Dave Garber, Paula Rodriguez

73rd Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Monday, March 27, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA), 8300 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX 77024
(713) 526-1188

Call to Order and Agenda		
Worship Service	Marcelo Jakubovic	4:00 PM
Presbytery Called to Order	TE Arnoult	4:30 PM
Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum; Adoption of the Docket; Introductions	TE Veiga	4:35 PM
Report of the Stated Clerk	TE Veiga	4:40 PM
Report of Treasurer	RE DeBruler	4:45 PM

Reports of the Standing Committees of Houston Metro Presbytery		
Administrative Committee	TE Harris	4:50 PM
Candidates and Credentials	TE Greco	4:55 PM

Reformed University Fellowship	chairman	5:10 PM
Mission to North America	TE Wright	5:20 PM
Ministerial Relations Committee	TE Bobos	5:30 PM
Nominations Committee	RE Brister	5:40 PM
Mission to the World	TE Wegener	5:45 PM
Report of Sessional Records	TE Blalack	5:55 PM

Meeting wrap-up and Dismissal		Time
Old Business	TBD	6:00 PM
New Business	TBD	6:00 PM
Resolution of Gratitude and Closing Prayer	TE Veiga	6:00 PM
Fellowship Meal	CEPC	6:05 PM

Announcement of time and place of next meeting:
74th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Friday, August 18, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA),
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

WELCOME

Today's guests and first-time visitors were introduced to our presbyters.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Everyone was reminded to sign the separate TE, RE, and Visitor sign-in sheets. Eric Green, an RTS Jackson student, was introduced and welcomed.

A quorum was declared.

It was announced that if anyone is currently not receiving emails from the Stated Clerk, they are to let him know before today's meeting concludes.

Motion to approve today's proposed docket as previously distributed. M/C.

1. Motion to approve the previously distributed Proposed Minutes of our January, 2023 HMP Stated Meeting. M/C.

2. It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the following excused absences: **TE Alan McCall, TE Todd Crusey, TE John D Wagner, TE Ron Dunton, TE Chris Yates, TE David Wakeland, TE Juan Carlos Martinez, and TE Julian Zugg.**

3. If you have any changes to the members and make-up of your church's Session, or to your Session's clerk position, or to any ministerial position (e.g., Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor), please send these changes to your HMP Stated Clerk.

4. Heads of Presbytery committees are kindly reminded to send the Stated Clerk a soft copy of their report *in Word format (.doc)* and to include any motions carried forward from their committee.

5. The future HMP meeting dates and locations were announced as information:

- Friday, August 18, 2023 — Christ the King, PCA
- Monday, November 13, 2023 — Christ the King, PCA
- Friday, January 19, 2024 — Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA
- Monday, April 8, 2024 — Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA

6. In the hope of improving communications with your Stated Clerk on important matters, please follow up your email correspondence with a text message.

7. Invitation to this weekend's Evangelism Conference at Covenant PCA (Houston). TE Tim McKeown (PCA) and TE Brad Peppo (OPC) will be our teachers. The conference begins with a catered BBQ dinner at 6:00 p.m. on Friday. The conference will conclude with an outreach event to the Final Four on Saturday afternoon. See the March HMP White Book for the conference schedule and lecture topics.

TE Veiga concluded this report.

The Stated Clerk's Report was received as a whole.

TREASURER'S REPORT

RE David DeBruler, the Treasurer, reported. Mr. DeBruler distributed his written report, see Attachment A.

The report was received and closed in prayer by **TE Arnoult**.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

TE Richard Harris, the Chair of this Committee, had no report.

CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

TE Fred Greco, the Chair of this Committee, gave his committee's report at this time.

Motions: to arrest the exams. **M/P.**

Marcelo Jakubovic (Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA, Houston)

1. Mr. Jakubovic has the endorsement of the Session of Christ Presbyterian Church, Houston, of which he has been a member for more than six months.
2. Approve the examination of Mr. Marcelo Jakubovic in Christian Experience, including motives for seeking the ministry. **M/P.**
3. Enroll Marcelo Jakubovic as a candidate for the gospel ministry in Houston Metro Presbytery (per BCO 18-7). **M/P.**
4. The questions in BCO 18-3 were asked by the Moderator and Mr. Jakubovic responded in the affirmative.
5. Assign TE Richard Harris as a mentor to Marcelo Jakubovic. **M/P.**

Julio Rodriguez (Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA, Houston)

1. Mr. Rodriguez has the endorsement of the Session of Christ Presbyterian Church, Houston, of which he has been a member for more than six months.
2. Approve the examination of Mr. Julio Rodriguez in Christian Experience, including motives for seeking the ministry. **M/P.**
3. Enroll Julio Rodriguez as a candidate for the gospel ministry in Houston Metro Presbytery (per BCO 18-7). **M/P.**
4. The questions in BCO 18-3 were asked by the Moderator and Mr. Rodriguez responded in the affirmative.
5. Assign TE Richard Harris as a mentor to Julio Rodriguez **M/P.**

Joe Congdon (MTW Japan)

1. **TE Joe Congdon**, MTW Missionary in Japan, be appointed to the work of an evangelist for a period of 12 months, renewable at the April 2024 Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery (and at each April meeting thereafter). Such appointment will commission TE Congdon to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to receive and dismiss members of mission churches, and to train potential officers. (BCO 8-6). **M/P**.

TE Greco concluded his report and closed in prayer.

REFORMED UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

RE Eric Haaland, the Chair of this committee, opened in prayer and gave a report.

Reports from a couple of our RUM campus ministers were heard.

TE Curtis Shields, RUM minister at Rice University, gave his report.

TE Brooks Harwood at the University of Houston RUM gave his report.

Prayer was offered for RUM. This concludes the report.

MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE

TE Brad Wright, the Chairman of this committee, reported.

Mr. Paul Joiner, with Metanoia Prison Ministries, spoke about the MPM correspondence ministry.

TE Taylor Leachman reported on Advent mission church (PCA). Mr. Leachman asks for prayer for the Medical Center ministries.

The committee's report was closed with prayer.

MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

TE Kyle Bobos, the Chair of this Committee, gave his report, opening with prayer.

Two motions:

1. Kevin Arevalo, called as an Associate Pastor. To change from Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor. Minutes of the congregational meeting of Redeemer Sugar Land approving the call were submitted. **M/P**.
2. Redeemer Presbyterian Church presented the call to Kevin Arevalo. TE Arevalo accepted the call.

3. Appoint a commission of Houston Metro Presbytery, composed of at least **TEs Janas Caruncho and Jaime Jimenez** and **Res David Fish and Michael Kuo** to install TE Kevin Arevalo.
4. Prayer was offered by **TE Bobos** for this committee.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

RE Daryl Brister gave this committee's report. Committee met over Zoom two weeks ago.

We will vote for the PCA General Assembly committees and positions. Please see Attachment B.

RE Dave Cias prayed for our commissioners and for the General Assembly in June.

MISSION TO THE WORLD COMMITTEE

TE Jason Wegener, the Chair of this Committee, gave his report. Reported on TE Todd Crusey's work in London. Mr. Crusey may stay in England longer to serve in a local church upon the pastor's illness. Mr. Wegener also reported about a reformed seminary in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, which has been recommended to our presbytery.

REVIEW OF SESSION RECORDS COMMITTEE

TE Mark Blalack, the Chair of this Committee, gave his written report.

Mark reminded the session clerks of the RSR Checklist for filing their minutes.

Mr. Blalack moved the following items:

1. 2022 Minutes Without Exceptions: Christ the King, Cornerstone, Kings Cross, Reformed, Spring Cypress.
2. 2022 Minutes With Exceptions of Form Only: Christ, Covenant (Houston).
3. 2022 Minutes with Exceptions of Substance: Bay Area, Christ Church (Katy), Covenant (Lufkin), Faith Community Church, Hosanna, Oaklawn, Providence, Redeemer (Sugar Land), Riverside, Southwest.
4. Approve Response to 2021, including Exceptions of Substance: Covenant (Lufkin), Faith Community Church, Grace (Woodlands), Hosanna, Providence, Southwest.
5. Unsatisfactory or No Response to 2021 plus Exceptions of Substance: Covenant (Lufkin), Faith Community Church, Grace (Woodlands), Hosanna, Providence, Southwest.
6. That this report be moved as a whole.

It was requested that items 3 and 5 be removed from the omnibus motion.

The revised omnibus motion was M/S/P.

Move: postpone items 3 and 5 until the August Presbytery meeting. M/S/P

Prayer was offered for this committee by **TE Curt Mire**.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was conducted.

NEW BUSINESS

No report was given at this time.

RESOLUTION OF GRATITUDE and CLOSING PRAYER

TE Blake Arnoult gave the resolution of thanks and closing prayer. We extend our thanks to **TE Richard Harris**, his Administrative Staff, the Session, and the congregation of Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) for hosting this 73rd Stated Meeting of HMP.

Announcement of time and place of next meeting:
74th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Friday, August 18, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA),
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

Motion was made to adjourn at 6:22 pm. **M/S/C**. Closing prayer with thanksgiving to God was offered by **TE Clay Holland**.

Submitted in good faith,

TE Lou Veiga,
Stated Clerk of Houston Metro Presbytery

March 27, 2023

**Proposed Minutes of the 74th Stated Meeting of the
Houston Metro Presbytery
4:00 pm, Friday, August 18, 2023
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA)
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464**

The Houston Metro Presbytery met for its 74th Stated Meeting at 4:08 PM at Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Houston, Texas.

The moderator, **TE Blake Arnoult**, called the presbytery to order and opened in prayer.

Presbytery enjoyed a worship service. RUF Pastor **TE Brooks Harwood** preached from Mark 4:26ff, “The Parable of the Growing Seed. “

Presbytery resumed at 4:38 pm.

After the moderator’s opening remarks, TE Arnoult introduced us to the facility and the house rules at Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA).

ROLL CALL AND QUORUM

TE Lou Veiga, the Stated Clerk, reported that the roll had been taken and that a quorum was present.

<u>Churches</u>	<u>Teaching Elders</u>	<u>Ruling Elder</u>
Bay Area		
Christ Church (Katy)	Fred Greco David King Jason Wegener	Mark Becker David Cias
Christ Presbyterian (Hou.)	Richard Harris Juan Carlos Martinez	Travis Graham Keith Pendergrass Ken Wynne
Christ Presbyterian (Huntsville)	Nolan Williamson	Clint Allen Sam Massey
Christ the King	Clay Holland John Trapp Andrés Zelaya	Ronny Cuenod

Cornerstone	Blake Arnoult	Neal Wade III
Covenant/Houston	Lou Veiga	Andy Edwards Wayne Slaikeu
Covenant/Lufkin	Mark O'Neill	
Faith		
Grace	Kyle Bobos	Andy Yung
Hosanna Community		
Oaklawn		
Providence	Alan McCall Seth Skogen	
Redeemer Sugar Land	Kevin Arevalo Janas Caruncho	
Reformed	Mark Blalack	Ryan Bowling Chuck Heare
Riverside	John Rieger	Eric Manthei
Southwest		Winston Dollahon David Van Voorhis
Spring Cypress		Erik Haaland Danny McDaniel
<u>Mission Churches:</u>	Taylor Leachman (Advent)	
<u>Mission to the World:</u>	Brenda Carter/Taiwan; Elizabeth Murray/Japan	
<u>Chaplains:</u>		
<u>Reformed University Ministry:</u>	Richard Harwood, Curtis Shields	
<u>Mission to North America:</u>		

Minister Laboring Out of Bounds:

Other Ministers on Roll: Jaime Jimenez, Ken Thurman, Julian Zugg

Other RE's present:

Other:

Under Care:

Visitors: Cody Dick, Advent; D. Charles Parks, King's Cross; Suzan Becker, Daryl Brister, CCK; Dave DeBruler, Dave Garber, Axel Sotel, Marcelo Jakubovic, Ammi Tan, Chris Williams, Greg & Beth Gleason, James McKissick, Jason Walker, Christ Presbyterian; Duncan Rankin, Blue Ridge Presbyterian, PCA; Alan Charnock, Redeemer-NYC; Kimmy Mota, RUF

74th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Friday, August 18, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA)
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

Worship Service 4:00 PM
Presbytery Called to Order TE Arnoult 4:30 PM
Roll Call; Declaration of Quorum; Adoption of
the Docket; Introductions

TE Veiga 4:35 PM
Report of the Stated Clerk TE Veiga 4:40 PM
Report of Treasurer RE DeBruler 4:45 PM

Reports of the Standing Committees of Houston Metro Presbytery

Administrative Committee - no report TE Harris 4:50 PM
Candidates and Credentials - no report TE Greco 4:50 PM
Reformed University Fellowship RE Haaland 4:50 PM
Mission to North America - no report TE Wright 5 PM
Ministerial Relations Committee - TE Bobos 5 PM
Nominations Committee RE - Brister 5:15 PM
Mission to the World -TE Wegener 5:25 PM
Report of Sessional Records - TE Blalack 5:35 PM

Meeting Wrap-up and Dismissal Time
Old Business TBD 5:40 PM

New Business TBD 5:40 PM
Resolution of Gratitude and Closing Prayer TE Veiga 5:40 PM
Fellowship Meal 6:00 PM

Announcement of time and place of next meeting:
75th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Monday, November 13, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA),
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

WELCOME

Today's guests and first-time visitors were introduced to our presbyters. Among these guests were Mr. Alan Moore and RE Cody Dick. Elizabeth Murray and Brenda Carter were in attendance. All of these were welcomed.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Everyone was reminded to sign the separate TE, RE, and Visitor sign-in sheets. Mr. Eric Green, a RTS Jackson student, was introduced and welcomed.

A quorum was declared by the Stated Clerk.

It was announced that if anyone is currently not receiving emails from the Stated Clerk, they are to let him know before today's meeting concludes.

Motion to approve today's proposed docket as previously distributed. Motion to amend the docket to advance the Ministerial Relations Committee's place in the docket, in order to hear their report regarding Oaklawn, PCA. **M/C.**

1. Motion to postpone approving the previously distributed Proposed Minutes of our March, 2023 HMP Stated Meeting (included in your HMP White Book) until the November presbytery meeting. **M/C.**
2. It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the following excused absences: **TE Todd Crusey, TE John D Wagner, TE David Wakeland, TE Ben Duncan, TE Pablo Martinez, TE Tim Stiemann, TE Dennis Hermerding, TE Curt Mire, and TE Patrick Fischl. M/S/C.**
3. If you have any changes to the members and make-up of your church's Session, or to your Session's clerk position, or to any ministerial position (e.g., Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor), please send these changes to your HMP Stated Clerk.
4. Heads of Presbytery committees are kindly reminded to send the Stated Clerk a soft copy of their report *in Word format (.doc)* and to include any motions carried forward from their committee.

5. The PCA General Assembly’s Review of Presbytery Records’ report and findings regarding Houston Metro’s filings will be reported and deliberated on at our next meeting in November.

6. In the hope of improving communications with your Stated Clerk on important matters, please follow up your email correspondence with a text message.

7. HMP is in receipt of a complaint that has been carried to it from Mr. Lev Li after the denial of his Complaint to the Covenant PCA Session (BCO 43-3) for the following specifications of error: The Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Houston, of the Presbyterian Church in America erred in the divorce case of Lev Li.

NOTE: As pastor of Covenant, I’m recused but wanted to bring it to your attention.

MOTION from the floor. That a BCO 15-3 Commission composed of the members of the Ministerial Relations Committee (TE Greco, TE Bobos, TE Arnoult, RE Joseph, RE Pine, and RE Brink), with TE Greco to be convener, be established to adjudicate the Complaint. **M/S/C.**

8. The future HMP meeting dates and locations were announced as information:

- Monday, November 13, 2023 — Christ the King, PCA
- Friday, January 19, 2024 — Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA
- Monday, April 8, 2024 — Christ Presbyterian Church, PCA

TE Veiga concluded this report.

The Stated Clerk’s Report was received as a whole.

TREASURER’S REPORT

RE David DeBruler, the Treasurer, reported. Mr. DeBruler distributed his written report. See pages 19-20 in the August HMP White Book.

The report was received and closed in prayer by **Mr. DeBruler**.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

TE Richard Harris, the Chair of this Committee, had no report.

CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

TE Fred Greco, the Chair of this Committee, gave no report at this time.

REFORMED UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

RE Eric Haaland, the Chair of this committee, opened in prayer and gave a report.

Reports from a couple of our RUM campus ministers were heard.

TE Curtis Shields, RUM minister at Rice University, gave his report.

Prayer was offered by **TE John Trapp** for Mr. Shields and his work at Rice U with RUM. This concludes the report.

MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE

TE Brad Wright, Chairman of this committee, had no report.

Amendment to the proposed docket follows.

Report from the Commission over Oaklawn, PCA, Houston.

Reporting was **TE Fred Greco**. Spanish-only services on a weekly basis. Motions: **TE Andres Zelaya** to recuse himself from this commission. Place **TE Brad Wright** on the Oakland commission — because Mr. Wright has worked with the Southwest Church Planting Network. M/S/C.

TE Greco closed this report with prayer.

MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

TE Kyle Bobos, the Chair of this Committee, gave his report, opening with prayer.

These are the three motions that the MRC brings at this time:

- That the call of **TE Jaime Jiménez** to Grace Presbyterian Church as Assistant Pastor, dated May 24, 2023 be approved (per BCO 22-3), effective July 1, 2023. M/C.
- That a commission of Houston Metro Presbytery, composed of at least **TEs Brad Wright (convener), Kyle Bobos and Andres Zelaya** and **REs Mark Moore, Brent Allmon, Jon Green, Rob McIntosh, Dan Brink and Andy Yung** (BCO 15-2), be established for the purpose of installing TE Jimenez as an Assistant Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church (on date TBD). M/C.
- That the Pastoral Relation between **TE Patrick Fischl** and Christ Presbyterian Church be dissolved, effective August 16, 2023 (BCO 23-1). M/C.

Prayer was offered by **TE Bobos** for this committee.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

RE Daryl Brister gave this committee's report.

There are two vacancies for the class of 2025 (one TE and one RE); nominations for TE Chris Yates and RE Daryl Brister were received from the floor. Each of TE Yates and RE Brister were elected.

The MNA Committee has one RE vacancy for the class of 2023. RE Sam Massie (Christ PCA, Huntsville) was nominated and elected.

TE Greco prayed for our committee members.

MISSION TO THE WORLD COMMITTEE

TE Jason Wegener, the Chair of this Committee, gave a report. The committee met this afternoon.

Funds are available for mission work upon request to this committee.

TE Todd Crusey, in London, England, has submitted his annual report. That report is available.

Ms. Elizabeth Murray gave her report concerning her outreach in Japan.

Ms. Brenda Carter gave her a report on her work in Taiwan.

TE Josh Reiger prayed for this committee and our missionaries, Elizabeth Murray (Japan) and Brenda Carter (Taipei).

REVIEW OF SESSION RECORDS COMMITTEE

TE Mark Blalack, the Chair of this Committee, gave his report.

Minutes received since the last meeting: Advent, Grace (Woodlands)

The minutes from the following churches were previously approved as needing No Response: Christ the King, Cornerstone, Christ, Covenant (Houston), Grace (2021), Kings Cross, Reformed, Spring Cypress, Redeemer (2021), Reformed.

2022 Minutes with Exceptions of Substance and 2021+ Minutes with Unsatisfactory or No Response: Bay Area ('22), Faith CC ('21 & '22), Hosanna ('21 & '22), Oaklawn ('22), Providence ('21 & '22), Redeemer ('22), Riverside ('22), Southwest ('21 & '22).

The Committee moves the following recommendations:

1. 2022 Minutes with Exception of Substance (Reviewed since March 2023 Meeting): Advent, Grace.
2. 2021-22 Minutes with Satisfactory Responses (since March 2023 Meeting): Christ Church (Katy), Covenant (Lufkin), Motion to include here Riverside. M/C.
3. That the consideration of the 2022 Minutes with Exceptions of Substance and 2021+ Minutes with Unsatisfactory or No Response be postponed to the Fall Stated Meeting of HMP.
4. That this report be received as a whole. M/C.

Prayer was offered for this committee by **TE Mark Blalack**.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was conducted.

NEW BUSINESS

No report was given at this time.

RESOLUTION OF GRATITUDE and CLOSING PRAYER

TE Lou Veiga gave the resolution of thanks and closing prayer. We extend our thanks to **TE John Trapp**, his Administrative Staff, the Session, and the congregation of Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA) for hosting this 74th Stated Meeting of HMP.

Announcement of time and place of next meeting:
75th Stated Meeting of Houston Metro Presbytery
Monday, November 13, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA),
1201 Silber Rd, Houston, TX 77055
(713) 892-5464

Motion was made to adjourn at 5:44 pm. M/S/C. Closing prayer with thanksgiving to God was offered by **TE Lou Veiga**.

Submitted in good faith,

TE Lou Veiga,
 Stated Clerk of Houston Metro Presbytery

August 18, 2023



Treasurer's Notes and Analysis regarding 10/31/2023 Financial Statements

- 1) Revenues have increased by \$13.4K since the end of July.
- 2) Expenses have increased only by \$1.5K since the end of July.
- 3) Therefore income has increase by \$11.9K since the end of July for a positive total of \$6.3K
- 4) The expense budget has \$22.7K remaining unspent, mostly in the Committee Operations accounts
- 5) Cash balance in the checking account is \$129.9K on 10/31/23 compared to \$108.9K on 10/31/22.
- 6) Please submit your budget requests by 12/15/23 to dwdebruler@outlook.com

Motions (assuming successful examinations):

Caleb McDuffee (Under care from Grace PCA Woodlands)

1. Note that Mr. McDuffee's session (Grace PCA Woodlands) has endorsed his candidacy (BCO 18-2).
2. Approve the examination of Mr. Caleb McDuffee in Christian Experience, including his motives for seeking the ministry.
3. Enroll Caleb McDuffee as a candidate for the gospel ministry in Houston Metro Presbytery (per BCO 18-7).
4. The questions in BCO 18-3 were asked by the Moderator and Mr. McDuffee responded in the affirmative.
5. Assign TE Kyle Bobos as a mentor to Caleb McDuffee.

Brad Bailey (Under care from Christ Church PCA Katy)

1. Note that Mr. Bailey's session (Christ Church PCA Katy) has endorsed his candidacy (BCO 18-2).
2. Approve the examination of Mr. Brad Bailey in Christian Experience, including his motives for seeking the ministry.
3. Enroll Brad Bailey as a candidate for the gospel ministry in Houston Metro Presbytery (per BCO 18-7).
4. The questions in BCO 18-3 were asked by the Moderator and Mr. Bailey responded in the affirmative.
5. Assign TE Fred Greco as a mentor to Brad Bailey

Duncan Rankin (Transfer)

1. Approve the examination of TE Duncan Rankin in Christian Experience, including motives for seeking the ministry.
2. Approve the examination of TE Duncan Rankin in views in Theology. TE Rankin offered no stated differences, therefore no statement of differences is recorded.
3. Approve the examination of TE Duncan Rankin in views in Sacraments.
4. Approve the examination of TE Duncan Rankin in views in the Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of the PCA.
5. Approve the examination of TE Duncan Rankin as a whole.
6. Approve the call of TE Duncan Rankin to Christ Church PCA.
7. Appoint a Commission of Presbytery of TE Fred Greco, TE Curt Mire, TE Julian Zugg, RE Neal Hare, RE Daryl Brister, RE Dave Cias, and RE Mark Becker, with TE Fred Greco as convener to install TE Duncan as Assistant Pastor at Christ Church (BCO 21-5, 21-9).
8. That TE Duncan Rankin be received into Houston Metro Presbytery, having been dismissed pending receipt by Blue Ridge Presbytery.

Axel Sotelo (Licensure)

1. Arrest each exam portion (in turn)
2. Approve Axel Sotelo's previous examination in Christian Experience (for coming under care) as meeting the requirements of BCO 19-2a.
3. Approve the examination of Axel Sotelo in English Bible.
4. Approve the examination of Axel Sotelo in Theology. Mr Sotelo offered no stated differences, therefore no statement of differences is recorded.
5. Approve the examination of Axel Sotelo in the Principles and Rules of Government and Discipline of the PCA.
6. Approve Axel Sotelo's sermon submitted to the committee as meeting the requirements of BCO 19-2.d
7. That Axel Sotelo be licensed to preach within the bounds of Houston Metro Presbytery (BCO 19-1).

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND CALLING EXAM
HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY

NAME: Caleb McDuffee

DATE OF EXAM: 10/14/2023

INSTRUCTIONS

The PCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* provides for an examination in Christian experience for candidacy, licensure, and ordination:

- “The applicant shall appear before the Presbytery in person, and shall be examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.” (*BCO* 18-3)
- “The examination for licensure shall be as follows: Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery).” (*BCO* 19-2)
- “Trials for ordination shall consist of... his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management.” This exam begins the process of fulfilling that requirement. (*BCO* 21-4.c(1)(a))
- Email the exam back to the Chairman, Fred Greco at fred.greco@cckpca.org by the test schedule deadline. If saving a Word file append your last name to the file.
- Use the space provided to answer your questions. If you need extra space, add lines below your answer.
- This is **not** an open book or note exam. Outside resources are **not** allowed.
- Please use Scripture references to support your answers.
- Please do not email this examination to anyone else without explicit permission from the chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

QUESTIONS

1. Give your Christian testimony.

I was born and raised in a Christian household that valued the gospel, and my parents were actively involved in teaching me and raising me up to understand the gospel message and my need for it. I understood the Bible and believed in Jesus and relied on His grace for the forgiveness of my sins from a very early age. I was taught that “all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God” (Romans 3:23), that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23), that “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8), and that “it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, but it is the gift of God. Not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, for a long time I simply viewed this as a “get out of jail free” card. It wasn’t until high school that I started to make him Lord of my life, which meant seeking to live in a way that was directed by him and pleasing to him. This was in large part a change made possible by God working through my youth pastor, Matt

Higginbotham, encouraging me and challenging me to mature in my faith. Upon graduating high school, I began to explore the possibility of one day going into full-time ministry. I enjoyed serving others and sharing my faith, and since I knew I would need to seek out some sort of career, I figured it wouldn't be a bad idea to make gospel ministry my career. After working the Summer before college at a Summer camp in Alpharetta, GA, I desperately wanted to be involved in the ministry I saw happening in big ways at the camp. It was not the ministry that was being done between counselors and our campers that was so inviting, but through the church hosting the camp towards us counselors that convinced me to pursue ministry. They poured into us counselors so that our cups were overflowing to pour into our campers! This is essentially what I desire to do in pastoral ministry. I desire to pour the encouragement of the gospel into those who will then be equipped to pour into those around them.

2. Describe your personal study and devotional habits.

If I am honest, my personal devotional habits are inconsistent. There are seasons throughout the year that I am consistent in setting aside time for personal study of God's Word and prayer, and there are seasons that I have not been faithful to make that a priority. One habit that I have gotten into, that I have heard is not the best practice for those in ministry, is to do my personal devotions from the passages that I will be teaching from in Sunday school and covering in my courses at Covenant theological Seminary.

3. In what areas have you in the past struggled or do you currently struggle in your Christian walk? In addition to your general answer, please provide specific responses to each of the following sub-questions:

One large area of struggle is the area of self-doubt which is really a symptom of a lack of faith. I am constantly questioning myself on whether I am equipped for ministry or cut out for it. I would compare myself to Moses in Exodus 3 and 4 when he can't help but find all the reasons that he isn't capable of doing the work God had called him to. Ultimately, I struggle to remind myself of what God essentially says to Moses which is, "this plan isn't going to work because of your capabilities, but because I am with you." In my head I know that God has called me to gospel ministry, but I still often feel like I am not good enough to meet the demands of ministry.

a. Have you been sued in civil court or been charged with committing a crime other than traffic violations? Please provide the details if your answer is "yes."

No.

b. Have you ever filed for protection in bankruptcy court? Please provide the details if your answer is "yes."

No.

c. Have you ever been accused of committing some sexual impropriety (whether formally or informally)? Please provide the details if your answer is “yes,” including whether, in your view, the accusation was valid and how, if it was, the accusation was resolved.

No.

d. Is there any event or circumstance in your life that, in your view, raises some doubt as to your suitability for ordination to leadership in the Christian church? Please describe any such event or circumstance and address the doubt it raises.

No.

e. Do you have any objection to having a background check conducted regarding your personal history? If so, please explain why you have such an objection.

No objection.

4. Describe the faith of your family members (if married).

5. What authors and books are you currently reading?

For work, one that I consistently go back to is “Sustainable Youth Ministry” by Mark Devries. For seminary, recent books I have been reading are “on incarnation” by Athanasius, “Clash of Visions” by Dr. Robert Yarbrough, and “Why I Am Not an Arminian” by Robert Peterson and Michael Williams. For personal study, “Crazy Busy” by Kevin Deyoung.

6. Is your spouse in support of your ministry? Please explain any reservations you believe she has. Do you object to her being asked questions about her support for your pursuit of a role in ministry? If so, please explain why you have such an objection.

Jessica, my wife, is very supportive of my pursuit of a career in ministry. While she is incredibly supportive and encouraging of me in this pursuit, her only reservation towards it is that she sees how difficult, tiring, and stressful it is for me as I work full-time in ministry while going through seminary education at the same time. This season of life while I am balancing so many things is a long season, and we want to begin to grow our family soon, but worry about how I will manage more on my plate.

7. How do you build your wife up and encourage her in her walk?

I pray for her and with her, and do my best to show her love through serving her daily and caring for her needs. We talk about what we are learning from scripture together, and how our faith relates to her job as a licensed counselor and the ministry she does through that.

8. Describe your inward call to the Gospel Ministry.

I have had many different roles serving in ministry growing up, from serving at VBS in middle school to interning at a church in college, and everything in between. God has used each of these experiences to confirm inside me a longing to work and serve His Church, and as I grew older, I realized I wanted to do this as a full-time job. Most of my experiences have planted in me a desire to specifically do ministry towards young people who I believe and have seen are very receptive to the gospel, and at a time in life when they are still growing and adapting their world view.

9. Describe outward confirmations of your inward call.

Two specific instances come to mind when I think about confirmations of my inward call. The first is when my youth pastor from high school and middle school called me while I was in college. He was now a lead pastor for a church a little more than a half an hour away from where I lived in Bryan, TX. He called and asked if I was willing to work part-time for him while I was in college to lead the student ministry at his church. The fact that he thought of me for his church was encouraging, and I worked for him for the last two years I was in college. He mentored me and encouraged me in my pursuit of ministry. The second instance of confirmation of my inward calling was when I was a summer intern for the student ministry at Christ the King, in Houston, after my Sophomore year in college. Towards the end of my internship, I met with Brad Wright in his office, and we talked about my future. He gave me advice for how to pursue Pastoral ministry, and told me to give him a call when I neared graduation if I wanted help looking for a job. I took this offer as a confirmation of what I was aiming for. During my senior year of college, sure enough Brad helped connect me to Grace in The Woodlands, in addition to several other churches. I have been Working at Grace for four years now, and Brad Wright has been the senior Pastor there for about three of them.

10. Are you a member in good standing in your Presbytery (or church, as applicable)?

Yes.

11. How have you resolved conflict by using Biblical principles?

Fortunately, I have never had to go through each of the steps of conflict resolution given by Jesus. I have rarely been involved in situations where two or three others are needed to be involved. In any conflict I am involved in, I try to engage with the person directly, and it has almost always been resolved then. The key principles I hold to, yet do not always exemplify properly, are to speak calmly, carefully, and gently, even when I am frustrated, and to remain humble, teachable, and open to what the other has to say. I have been fortunate enough to not have too much serious conflict in my lifetime, so it is safe to say I am a bit untested when it comes to dealing with conflict on a serious and personal level.

12. Do you have any difficulties managing your household well? Please describe any such difficulties.

No.

13. Do you have children? If so, are they baptized?

We do not have children yet.

14. How do you practice personal evangelism?

My job offers many opportunities to practice evangelism towards teenagers. I try to teach the gospel to them in the lessons I teach at our weekly youth group events and in Sunday school, and I also seek out gospel-oriented conversations when I meet with students throughout the week. Additionally, I make an effort to be evangelistic towards my neighbors, intentionally engaging them and building relationships that could lead to opportunities to share the gospel with them. This may be an odd circumstance, but I live on a street that has relatively frequent instances of impaired people who wander in and need help. My mindset is to use opportunities like these to show the love of Jesus in assisting them and sharing the gospel of Jesus with them in the process. These are some of the ways I practice personal evangelism.

15. How do you view your stewardship of your financial resources?

The Lord is the giver of all good gifts. It is important to keep that in mind when considering stewardship of financial resources. My wife and I work hard to be wise stewards when it comes to our finances. We both work full-time, so between the two of us, we are making enough to provide for ourselves and to give to the mission of our church. We try not to spend excessively on unessential things, and we do our best to prepare financially for plans we have in the future, such as growing our family, purchasing a house, buying a new (much needed) vehicle, paying for shoulder surgery and paying off student loans. I am very thankful for the financial resources available to me through my work, both for providing for me a generous salary and for supporting me financially through seminary. Even with these resources and the resources my wife brings in through her work, we still seem to be struggling to have leftovers to put towards future

plans, and that has been a bit of a stressor in our family. However, our mindset is to be faithful with the financial resources given to us, and to keep our hearts in the right place by making sure we are giving consistently to our church even when finances are tight.

16. Discuss some of the fruit in your ministry in the past.

Student ministry is such an inconsistent ministry when it comes to being able to see the fruit of your work, but when I do see it, it is such an encouragement to me. When I first came to Grace, the church had been without a full-time student ministry staff member for about a year, so my first task was to talk to students and their parents about the current state of student ministry and what they were excited about for the upcoming year. Without having had a full-time staff member for this ministry in a long time, by expectations weren't too high, but to my horror everyone described a ministry that struggled to attract more than an awkward few students to their regular programs, and admitted they weren't likely to be involved in the future. Despite these conversations, the Lord blessed the student ministry with thriving numbers quickly, and students seemed surprised and excited by the adjustments we made to enhance the ministry. The percentage of students in our church who are actively involved in our student ministry has skyrocketed and remained steady for the last few years. Numbers, however, aren't the only important thing. I have also been able to see the fruit of spiritual maturity developing in teenagers. It is truly amazing to see teenagers develop spiritual maturity so rapidly during their incredibly formative teenage years. I have also been blessed with parents sharing with me the impact I have had on their children. I can think specifically of one parent who pulled me aside at their student's graduation party and sincerely shared with me how thankful they were for the impact I have had on their student. Some other fruits have been seeing the seeds of the shared gospel beginning to take root in the lives of students for the first time, and having students who know nothing of Christianity hear and understand the gospel after a weekend retreat, summer camp, or Wednesday night youth group.

17. What is your wife's role in your shared ministry?

She is my biggest supporter. For the longest time I struggled to get adults to volunteer for our student ministry, and when that was the case, she was consistent and faithful with her presence and investment towards our students. She is quick to give a helping hand, and always looking for opportunities to step in and serve others. That has been seen specifically in the student ministry of our church, but also in other areas of ministry in our church, even the small, unseen, unthanked (and yet incredibly helpful) things such as coming early to events to help set up and staying late to help clean up. She also is a licensed counselor who works primarily in mental health for teenagers, so she is also considers her career part of her personal ministry.

18. Describe your and your family members' spiritual health.

My spiritual health is in a good spot right now and is continuing to strengthen through the classes I am taking at Covenant Theological Seminary and through God's Word and prayer. My wife's spiritual health is also in a good place right now. She is praying and seeking God through His Word, and uses the truths of her worldview to aid her in counseling. We talk frequently about how we are doing, what we are seeing in the world, and what we are thinking and feeling. We are quick to encourage one another in our walks of faith and to guide each other towards what representing Christ looks like in this season of our lives.

My parents and siblings have been through a lot in the last several years. Despite this, my parents seem to be spiritually healthy and growing in their faith. One of my siblings is a survivor of domestic abuse and is currently a single mom who has been through a lot and is still on the path of recovery. This has taken a toll on her and has shaken her spiritual upbringing. My brother wrestled with doubt and eventually deconstructed from Christianity and is now a self-declared agnostic. My other sister seems to be spiritually healthy.

19. What church and specific ministry are you being called to?

I am the student ministry director at Grace Presbyterian Church in The Woodlands.

20. When do you plan on moving to the field?

I have been here for 4 years.

- a. If you have received a call to a particular ministry, are the terms of that call acceptable to you?

I am thankful to be working at Grace, and believe the terms of my calling to be generous and caring towards me.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND CALLING EXAM
HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY

NAME: Bradford A. Bailey

DATE OF EXAM: 9/26/2023

INSTRUCTIONS

The PCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* provides for an examination in Christian experience for candidacy, licensure, and ordination:

- “The applicant shall appear before the Presbytery in person, and shall be examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.” (*BCO* 18-3)
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- “Trials for ordination shall consist of... his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management.” This exam begins the process of fulfilling that requirement. (*BCO* 21-4.c(1)(a))
- Email the exam back to the Chairman, Fred Greco at fred.greco@cckpca.org by the test schedule deadline. If saving a Word file append your last name to the file.
- Use the space provided to answer your questions. If you need extra space, add lines below your answer.
- This is **not** an open book or note exam. Outside resources are **not** allowed.
- Please use Scripture references to support your answers.
- Please do not email this examination to anyone else without explicit permission from the chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

QUESTIONS

1. **Give your Christian testimony.**

In short, I wasn't born to a Christian family, rarely attended church and I certainly never intended to become a Christian. That statement serves as both a stark reminder of who I was and, concerning the ridiculous intimation of my “intentions”, a humbling reminder of who I am today by God's grace. I was raised in what could only be graciously described as a nominal Christian home at best. Aside from the obligatory Easter and Christmas services offered at the only Church I ever knew.

I had throughout all those years a general belief in God. This “belief” was largely a superstitious acknowledgement of a “higher power” in the mold of the Biblical God. Even so, this belief hardly manifested as anything outside of moralistic guilt and occasionally as a last resort when circumstances left me no other alternative than to try the equivalent of throwing my troubles to the sky in the hope that this

“higher power” might hear me.

Through a series of events that brought my life crashing down, at 19, I had nowhere to live and very few real friends and was forced to beg my mother to allow me to move in with her to which she only agreed to as temporary and only if I found a real job and paid rent. God’s providence had brought me to this lowly estate, stripped of all my means and pride, to prepare my heart to meet him. I was not saved in a church nor under the conviction of a sermon. I did not raise a hand, walk an aisle or say The Sinner’s Prayer. Ironically, I was saved alone in a room with a mass-market paperback edition of a New Testament Bible. While unpacking my few remaining belongings in my now rented room, I found this Bible sitting atop a box sitting just inside the door of a closet as I was putting my clothes away. The irony lies in the fact that I had grown to hate that book and everything it stood for. I had read portions of it from time-to-time and found it archaic and useless. In fact, I made a practice of pointing out certain passages (Deut. 3, Josh. 6, etc.) that showed the “evil god” to those who professed to be Christians. I felt that the Bible was nothing more than an old book written by old men to an old people that had very little relevance for anyone who was in their right mind.

After some time, back at home, one night I was lying down I found that I could not sleep. As I lay there, I could not shake an incredible urge to read that Bible. Finally relenting, I got out of bed, grabbed the Bible from the closet and began to read. From this moment forward I have never been the same. I became incredibly drawn to read the Bible at every chance I could over the next week. No longer was this some old book written to a dead people, it became alive to me. I began to make excuses as to why I couldn’t hang out with my friends so that I could get home and pick up where I left off. As I continued reading, I increasingly felt more and more convicted of my sinfulness. I read the warnings of Jesus, the demands of righteousness and the admonitions of Peter, Paul, John and James to evil-doers and became overwhelmed with a deep sorrow of my sins and a fear for my soul under the scrutiny of God’s holy judgement. Left there, I knew I was doomed. However, through the realization of my sinful condition and the burden of the judgement I now knew I deserved, the healing words of the gospel began to arise from the pages of that Bible to my heart. Reading the sorrow of Christ over Jerusalem in Matt. 23 and the pleadings of Paul in 2 Cor. 5 among other passages, I saw a sorrow for me and a pleading for my soul. I remember very clearly reading in John 6:35-40 and utterly breaking-down and pouring my soul out to Jesus.

There was such a relief and assurance that Jesus would save me from God’s wrath and judgement if I only but came to Him filth and all. I didn’t know how to pray so I just cried out to Jesus and confessed my sin. I knew nothing of doctrine, theology, or even the most basic tenets of the Scriptures, but on that day, I came to know Jesus. Beyond that, I knew only three things for sure: I was a terrible sinner

deserving Hell, Jesus was my only hope, and the Bible I held in my hands was the very words of God. In a sense my family's fears were right, I did die before my twenty first birthday, I died to self and began to live for Christ.

2. Describe your personal study and devotional habits.

My personal study and devotional habits stem from a sincere longing to draw closer to God and an earnest desire to align myself with His will. Each morning, I am reminded of the words in Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path," as I study Scripture, seeking guidance and wisdom. Alongside this, I try to heed the advice of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and "pray without ceasing." Through my moments of prayer, I find communion with God, a space to express gratitude, and an opportunity to seek His guidance for my life. While my seminary studies lead me into systematic explorations of theology, it's through the quiet meditations, inspired by Joshua 1:8, that I truly internalize God's Word, allowing it to shape my heart and mind. I've also found solace in maintaining a spiritual journal, documenting my reflections and insights from Scripture. The wisdom in Proverbs 27:17 reminds me of the value of community, and thus, I've been blessed with several people to encourage me in my devotions. Together, we navigate our spiritual journeys, seeking mutual edification. The significance of corporate worship isn't lost on me, and I cherish the moments of collective praise, sacraments, and fellowship, as suggested by Hebrews 10:25. In all of this, I humbly strive to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" as mentioned in 2 Peter 3:18, always recognizing that I am a work in progress, relying on God's grace each step of the way.

3. In what areas do you currently struggle in your Christian walk?

In my Christian journey, I indeed encounter challenges that test my resolve and commitment. A pronounced struggle for me, especially in my current theological pursuits, is the peril of allowing these profound studies to devolve into mere academic exercises. While the academic rigor of theological study is essential, there's an inherent danger in approaching it as one would any other secular course or professional task. The rich, transformative truths about God and His relationship with us can inadvertently be treated as mere subjects to be mastered, rather than life-altering revelations to be internalized and lived out.

This struggle is twofold. Firstly, there's the risk of familiarity breeding complacency. When constantly surrounded by deep theological truths, it's possible to become desensitized to their gravity and beauty. Secondly, the academic environment, with its emphasis on critical analysis and intellectual rigor, can sometimes overshadow the spiritual essence of these truths.

This academicization of faith, where the heart's passion can be overshadowed by the mind's analysis, is a real challenge. It's a balancing act to maintain intellectual rigor while ensuring that the heart remains receptive and aflame with the transformative power of God's Word. I continuously strive to anchor my studies in devotion, ensuring that every theological insight deepens my relationship with God and strengthens my commitment to serve His people. This intentional approach helps me guard against the risk of my studies becoming just another academic affair, devoid of its spiritual vitality.

4. **How are you dealing with problems in your walk?**

Addressing the specific challenge of theological studies becoming merely academic in nature requires a deep introspection and intentional action. Recognizing this, I've leaned heavily on the Holy Spirit's guidance through prayer. Romans 8:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. The Spirit, through the Word, reminds me of the sacredness and privilege of my studies and their ultimate purpose: a deeper relationship with God and service to His people. When academic pressures mount, it's the Holy Spirit that anchors my heart, redirecting my focus from mere intellectual accumulation to genuine spiritual transformation.

My church community also plays a critical role in this journey. They are a constant reminder of the real-world implications of theology. The lived experiences of my church family, their struggles, and joys, underscore the importance of applying theological knowledge in practical, life-affirming ways. Through communal worship, prayer, and the sacraments—those means of grace—I am routinely brought back to the heart of why I embarked on theological studies in the first place: to know God more deeply and to shepherd His people more effectively.

Furthermore, my relationships with peers and mentors at the seminary have been instrumental. Many have faced similar challenges, and their insights and experiences provide both caution and encouragement. Engaging in heartfelt discussions with them, sharing apprehensions, and seeking advice has been a source of great strength. Their reminders, rooted in love and mutual respect, act as checkpoints, ensuring that my pursuit of theology remains heart-centered rather than just head-centered.

In essence, while the potential for theological studies to become merely academic is real, my reliance on the Holy Spirit, the grounding influence of my church community, the means of grace, and the supportive relationships within my seminary and church have been invaluable in preserving the sanctity and purpose of my walk.

5. **Describe the faith of your family members (if married).**

My family, each in their unique journey, displays varied facets of faith, reflecting the diverse ways in which God works in our lives.

My wife, my rock and partner in all aspects of life, embodies a deep and abiding faith. Her commitment to striving to live out the virtues detailed in Proverbs 31 is evident and showcases her dedication to being a godly woman. She also seeks to

emulate the principles laid out in Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 3, striving to be a supportive wife and maintaining a life of godliness and reverence. Her faith is not just evident in her words but is consistently demonstrated in her actions, choices, and the love she extends to our family and community.

Our eldest daughter, now navigating the intricacies of adulthood, is on a reflective journey. While she was nurtured in a faith-filled home, she's now grappling with understanding what it means to be a Christian on her own terms, outside of the immediate influence of her parents. This phase, while challenging, is also a testament to the authenticity of her faith, as she seeks to make it personal and relevant in her adult life.

Our middle children, both starting their college journeys, are in a pivotal phase. My son is learning to stand firm, understanding what it means to be a courageous Christian amidst the manifold temptations and challenges of young adulthood. My daughter, too, is on a similar path. They are anchoring themselves in local church while in college, which speaks volumes about their commitment to remain connected to a faith community. Their involvement in college ministries further showcases their desire to grow in their faith and reliance on the Lord and find fellowship with like-minded peers.

Lastly, our youngest, still under our roof, is a beacon of faithfulness. She's actively involved in the church, not just as a communing member but also as a vibrant participant in various volunteer activities and ministries. Her enthusiasm and dedication to serve are evident and are a testament to her genuine love for God and His people.

In essence, while each family member is at a different stage in their spiritual journey, their faith stories collectively paint a picture of God's enduring grace, guidance, and love in our lives.

6. What authors and books are you currently reading?

Reformed Systematic Theology – Joel Beeke & Paul Smalley
Confessing the Faith – Chad Van Dixhoorn
Devoted to God – Sinclair Ferguson
John Owen on the Christian Life – Sinclair Ferguson
Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers – John Owen
Social Justice Fallacies – Thomas Sowell

7. Is your spouse in support of your ministry?

Absolutely, my wife's unwavering support has been instrumental in my journey

towards pursuing my aspirations to pastoral ministry. We have discussed and prayed about my call to Pastoral ministry for many years.

8. **How do you build her up?**

Our relationship is anchored in the understanding that, as Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." With this scripture as my guide, though imperfectly, I strive to love her sacrificially, putting her needs and well-being above my own. I make it a point to spend quality time with her, listening to her thoughts, dreams, and concerns. This not only strengthens our bond but allows me to understand and support her in her aspirations and endeavors.

Prayer plays a central role in our relationship. We dedicate time to pray together, interceding for one another and seeking God's guidance for our family. Through prayer, we have witnessed God's faithfulness and have grown together in our shared faith.

I also prioritize open communication. Recognizing that ministry can be demanding, where appropriate, I seek her unique wisdom as my wife and a sister in Christ valuing her insights and perspectives. Her wisdom has often provided clarity in times of uncertainty.

Furthermore, I encourage her in her spiritual journey. Whether it's through studying scripture together, discussing theological insights, or simply sharing testimonies of God's work in our lives, we spur one another on in our faith.

9. **Describe your inward call to the Gospel Ministry.**

My journey to discerning the inward call to the Gospel Ministry was neither immediate nor straightforward. In the beginning, I grappled with doubt and uncertainty, often questioning whether the stirrings in my heart were genuinely from God or merely products of my own aspirations. The path to clarity was not a straight line but rather a winding road of introspection, prayer, and seeking counsel.

One of the earliest and most defining moments of clarity in this journey was a profound realization: a deep-seated desire to magnify God in the hearts of others. I felt an overwhelming yearning to help people see the vastness, beauty, and intricacy of God's character—to make God "bigger" in their eyes, to help them grasp the immeasurable greatness of His love and grace. The words of John 3:30, "He must become greater; I must become less," began to resonate deeply within me. This wasn't about me or any personal ambition; it was about elevating God's glory and drawing souls closer to Him.

As I continued to seek God's guidance, diving deeper into His Word and spending

countless hours in prayer, I began to sense a gentle affirmation of this calling. The more I shared my uncertainties and desires with mentors, fellow believers, and church leaders, the more I felt encouraged. Many saw the genuine passion behind my wish to exalt God and shepherd His flock, even amidst my initial reservations.

Over time, the combination of my desire to magnify God and the affirmations from my community served as strong indicators of my calling. The Apostle Paul's words took on new meaning for me: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" That compulsion, although initially clouded by doubt, became clearer as I recognized the divine mandate to serve God and His people.

In reflection, my inward call to the Gospel Ministry was a journey of discovering God's purpose amidst uncertainty, driven by a heartfelt desire to magnify Him in the hearts of all who would listen.

10. **Describe your outward confirmation of your inward call.**

The outward confirmation of my inward call to the Gospel Ministry has been evident through various avenues of service and the affirmations of the church community over the years. While my inner conviction was strong, it was through these tangible experiences and feedback from others that God further solidified this calling.

Teaching has been one of the most profound avenues of this confirmation. Over the years, I've had the privilege to teach Sunday School classes to various age groups, from the energetic youngest members of our congregation to the more seasoned adults. With each class, I've witnessed the transformative power of God's Word, and the unique challenges and joys of connecting with different age demographics have sharpened my skills and deepened my passion for ministry.

My involvement in leading small groups has been another significant aspect of this journey. These intimate settings have allowed me to engage deeply with individuals, fostering genuine relationships and guiding them in their spiritual growth. The shared moments of vulnerability, discovery, and breakthrough have been invaluable in shaping my pastoral heart.

Youth ministry, too, has played a pivotal role. Working alongside dedicated youth pastors, I've had the opportunity to mentor and guide the next generation, helping them navigate the complexities of faith in their formative years. The vibrancy and inquisitiveness of the youth have continually challenged and inspired me.

Preaching from the pulpit, albeit on a few occasions, has been a profound experience. To stand before the congregation, entrusted with the task of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, has both humbled and invigorated me. Each sermon

has been a reminder of the weight of the calling and the grace of God that equips me.

But perhaps the most affirming aspect of my outward confirmation has been the feedback from the congregation and fellow believers. Time and again, many have expressed their appreciation for my teaching, noting the clarity, depth, and passion with which I deliver God's Word. Numerous individuals, both peers and mentors, have encouraged me to pursue pastoral ministry.

In sum, while the inward call set the direction of my passion to share the Gospel, it has been the myriad of outward experiences and the unwavering support and affirmation of the church community that have confirmed and strengthened my commitment to serve God and His people in the Gospel Ministry.

11. **Are you a member in good standing in your Presbytery?**

I am.

12. **How have you resolved conflict by using Biblical principles?**

Navigating conflict using Biblical principles has always been paramount in my approach, as I believe that the Scriptures provide us with the wisdom and guidance needed to handle disagreements and misunderstandings in a manner that honors God.

In line with the teachings of Matthew 18, my primary approach to any conflict, however minor, has always been to address the matter directly with the individual involved. Jesus' instruction in Matthew 18:15 is clear. Taking this to heart, I have always sought to initiate a private conversation, aiming for a heart-to-heart discussion where both parties can express their perspectives, feelings, and concerns openly and honestly.

In these conversations, I prioritize active listening, striving to understand the other person's point of view before expressing my own. Proverbs 18:13 reminds us, "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame." I've found that genuine understanding and honesty often paves the way for reconciliation.

Furthermore, I lean heavily on the principle of speaking the truth in love, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:15. While it's essential to address the matter at hand, it's equally vital to ensure that the conversation is rooted in love, respect, and a genuine desire for unity.

In instances where disagreements persisted, I've always been open to seeking mediation, whether it be through a trusted mutual friend or a church leader, to facilitate a resolution.

By God's grace, the conflicts I've encountered have never escalated beyond the individual level and have been resolved amicably. In every situation, I've been reminded of the importance of humility, patience, and the overarching goal of preserving the bond of peace within the Body of Christ, as emphasized in Ephesians 4:3.

13. **Do you manage your household well?**

Indeed, managing a household, especially one with four children at various stages of life, comes with its unique challenges and joys. I'm blessed to have a family that, while not perfect—as no family truly is—has been a source of strength, learning, and growth for me.

Paul's words in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 resonate deeply: "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)". Recognizing the weight of this biblical mandate, I've endeavored to lead my household in a way that aligns with godly principles.

My eldest daughter, now an adult and out of the house, has been a testament to the grace of God and the fruit of intentional parenting. Watching her grow, make decisions, and establish herself has been both rewarding and a challenging experience. It reminds me of Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

With the two middle children now off to college, the transition has been a mix of pride and the inevitable pangs of an 'emptying nest'. The early years of nurturing, teaching, and guiding come to fruition as they embark on this new chapter, pursuing higher education and carving out their paths.

As for my youngest, still at home, the journey continues. The lessons learned from raising the older siblings provide invaluable insights, yet each child is unique, requiring tailored approaches, understanding, and guidance.

While my children are by no means perfect, I'm grateful that they are obedient, submissive, and fundamentally good-hearted. This is not solely a testament to my efforts but is largely attributed to God's grace and the collective nurturing of my wife, the church community, and the broader village that has played a role in their upbringing.

In sum, I believe that by God's grace and through diligent effort, I have managed my household well. The journey has equipped me with insights, experiences, and lessons that not only enrich my personal life but also inform my ministry.

14. **How do you practice personal evangelism?**

Practicing personal evangelism has always been a deeply relational endeavor for me, often termed as "friendship evangelism". I firmly believe in the importance of establishing genuine relationships based on trust, mutual respect, and understanding as foundational to sharing the Gospel. While I am eager to communicate the life-changing message of Christ, I am equally committed to ensuring that it is shared within the context of a meaningful relationship.

In my approach, I prioritize getting to know individuals on a personal level, understanding their life stories, challenges, aspirations, and worldviews. This not only provides a backdrop for more contextually relevant Gospel conversations but also communicates genuine care and interest in them as individuals.

I've always adhered to the principle that one must "earn the right" to share hard truths and this includes the Gospel. This doesn't mean the Gospel's value is contingent on our actions, but rather that its reception is often enhanced when shared from a platform of established trust. By investing time, showing empathy, and demonstrating consistent Christian character, I aim to create an environment where spiritual discussions can occur naturally, without feeling forced or intrusive.

Moreover, while I'm proactive in initiating spiritual conversations, I'm also keenly aware of cues and open doors. I strive to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, discerning the right moments to delve deeper into matters of faith.

In essence, my practice of personal evangelism is deeply intertwined with building and nurturing relationships. I believe that the Gospel is best received when shared within the warmth of genuine friendship, where trust is established, and mutual respect is upheld.

15. **What is the nature of your financial stewardship?**

We view our financial stewardship as a reflection of our commitment to biblical principles. By God's grace, we've been able to remain mostly debt-free, with only a mortgage as our outstanding liability. This intentional decision was made to ensure that we could pursue theological education without the hindrance of financial burdens, especially if called to pastoral ministry.

Tithing has always been central to our financial practices, as we believe in honoring God with the first fruits of our earnings. Additionally, we've prioritized living within our means and avoiding unnecessary debts.

Beyond our regular tithes, we have a heart for generosity. Whenever we're blessed with the ability to help, we joyfully assist, whether it's supporting missions, contributing to charitable causes, or aiding individuals in need.

In sum, our approach to finances is guided by prudence, responsibility, and a spirit of generosity, all underpinned by our desire to serve God and His kingdom faithfully.

16. **Discuss some of the fruit in your ministry in the past.**

Over the years, I've been blessed to witness tangible fruit in the ministries I've been involved in. Numerous individuals have approached me seeking advice and theological insight. It's been profoundly rewarding to see how these conversations, grounded in Scripture and prayer, have provided clarity and guidance to those navigating spiritual questions and challenges.

My involvement in college ministries has been especially fruitful. I've had the privilege of ministering to several young adults, and their feedback has often been heartening. Many have shared how their faith was strengthened and their understanding deepened through our sessions and discussions. Even more gratifying is the knowledge that some, through our ministry, have come to a saving faith in the Lord.

My professional life, too, has been an avenue for ministry. In past jobs, I actively sought opportunities to share the Gospel, leading to many non-believers showing interest in spiritual matters. This evangelistic effort bore fruit when several of them, upon invitation, began attending Bible studies at my home. These sessions weren't just about theological discussions; they were about building relationships and creating a space for genuine spiritual exploration.

Perhaps one of the most personal and profound fruits of my ministry is the story of my best friend. We began as colleagues, but over time, our discussions evolved

from work-related topics to deeper spiritual matters. It was in my living room, amidst heartfelt conversations, that he came to a transformative faith in Christ. Witnessing his journey from skepticism to a vibrant faith has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my ministry. Today, he not only has a wonderful wife and two children but also serves as an elder in his church, further testament to God's incredible work in his life.

In reflection, while I've played a role in these ministries, it's evident that the true transformation is orchestrated by God. I'm merely a vessel, and it's His grace and power that bring about lasting change in people's lives.

17. **What is your wife's role in your shared ministry?**

Our shared ministry is truly a partnership, with my wife playing a pivotal role in complementing and enhancing our collective efforts to serve God's people.

Both of us have been blessed to serve as parent leaders in the youth group for the past seven years, working alongside Youth Pastors and their wives. In this capacity, my wife brings her unique gifts, insights, and perspectives, enriching our outreach to the younger members of our congregation. Together, we've strived to create an environment where the youth feel seen, valued, and spiritually nourished from the Word of God.

Furthermore, my wife's presence in the Sunday school classes I teach is more than just a show of support. She consistently upholds both the class and me in prayer, interceding for spiritual growth, understanding, and transformation for all involved. Her prayers have been a source of strength, guidance, and encouragement, fostering a spirit-led atmosphere in the classroom.

Additionally, our home has often served as a hub for spiritual fellowship. We've had the privilege of being host families for community groups, creating a welcoming space for believers to connect, share, and delve deeper into God's Word. While I often take on the role of teaching during these community group gatherings, my wife is instrumental in ensuring a warm and hospitable environment, facilitating open discussions and fostering close-knit relationships.

In essence, our shared ministry is in many ways a collaborative endeavor, with my wife supporting me, each of us contribute our unique strengths, skills, and passions. Together, we aim to serve God's kingdom with unified hearts and purpose, always seeking to glorify Him in all we do.

18. **What will you do when your wife is under attack from church members?**

When faced with a situation where my wife is under attack from church members, my foremost duty is to support and protect her. Adhering to Matthew 18:15-17, I would first approach the individuals involved for a direct conversation, aiming to understand and address their concerns. Simultaneously, it's vital that my wife feels my unwavering support and love during such times.

If the challenge persists, I'd seek guidance from trusted church leaders or elders, valuing their wisdom in navigating these waters. Throughout this process, prayer would be our anchor, turning to God for direction and peace. I'd always prioritize fostering unity within the church, addressing conflicts in ways that promote reconciliation.

Every challenge also offers a chance for reflection, allowing us to discern areas of growth or understanding. However, maintaining boundaries becomes essential if certain behaviors continue, ensuring the spiritual and emotional well-being of all parties involved. In all endeavors, the guiding principle is to act with grace, love, and a commitment to biblical truth.

19. **Describe your spiritual health. Your family?**

My spiritual health, particularly in this season of transition from a career to pursuing an MDiv at RTS, has been both challenging and immensely rewarding. The decision to immerse myself in theological studies, while demanding, has deeply invigorated my spirit. Each day, I find myself drawing closer to God, gaining a richer understanding of His Word, and experiencing a renewed passion for ministry. This academic and spiritual journey has been transformative, shaping not only my knowledge but also my heart and relationship with God.

Regarding my family, they too have been on a journey of their own. While the changes and adjustments that came with my decision have posed certain challenges, they have navigated them with grace and resilience. I've been heartened to see their unwavering support and their own spiritual growth amidst the transitions. We've become more intentional about leaning into our faith, seeking God's guidance, and supporting one another in prayer and love. In essence, while the path has had its share of hurdles, it has undeniably strengthened our individual and collective spiritual well-being.

20. **What church and specific ministry are you being called to?**

I am currently in a season of discernment regarding the specific church to which I may be called. While the exact congregation remains uncertain at this moment, what is clear to me is a distinct calling towards pastoral ministry. I feel a deep and compelling urge to shepherd God's flock, to teach and guide them through the

truths of Scripture, and to walk alongside them in their spiritual journeys. My heart is drawn to the pastoral role, where I can be intimately involved in the lives of believers, offering spiritual guidance, support, and encouragement as they navigate their faith. While I continue to seek God's direction for the specific church setting, my commitment to the pastoral vocation remains unwavering.

21. **When do you plan on moving to the field?**

As soon as I am done with Seminary and all requirements of the PCA. Estimated Spring of 2025

22. **Is the call to ministry at this church acceptable to you?**

Indeed.

BIBLE EXAM
HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY

NAME: Axel Sotelo

DATE OF EXAM: 10/07/23

INSTRUCTIONS

The PCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* provides in 21-4c.: “Trials for ordination shall consist of...Bible content.” This exam begins the process of fulfilling that requirement.

- Email the exam back to the Chairman, Fred Greco at fred.greco@cckpca.org by the test schedule deadline. If saving a Word file append your last name to the file.
- Use the space provided to answer your questions. If you need extra space, add lines below your answer.
- This is **not** an open book or note exam. Outside resources are **not** allowed.
- Please use Scripture references to support your answers.
- Please do not email this examination to anyone else without explicit permission from the chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

SECTION I: WHOLE BIBLE

1. How many books are in the Bible?

66

2. How many books in the OT? NT?

39 OT

27 NT

3. Have you read the entire Bible?

Yes

4. Where in the Old Testament would you find the 10 Commandments? Where in the New Testament would you find the law summarized?

Exodus 20:1-17 and Deut. 5:6-21

Matt. 22:37-40 and Mark 12

5. Locate two passages about the revelation of God in nature?

Psalms 19

Romans 1:18-20

SECTION II: OLD TESTAMENT (GENERAL)

1. Name the general divisions of the Old Testament and the books in each.

Law – Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut.

History – Josh, Judg, Ruth, 1-2 Sam, 1-2 Kgs, 1-2 Chr, Ezra, Neh, Esther.

Wisdom and Poetry – Job, Psalms, Prov, Eccls, SoS.

Major Prophepets – Isa, Jer, Lam, Eze, Dan.

Minor Prophets – Hos, Joel, Amos, Obad, Jonah, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zeph, Hag, Zech, Mal.

2. Give a general outline of Old Testament History, including key dates.

Creation - Gen 1-3

Flood - Gen 4-11

Patriarchs - Gen 12-50 (Call of Abe - 2100)

Exodus - Exodus-Deut (1440 BC)

Conquest - Joshua (1400)

Judges - Judges - 1 Sam. (1375)

United Kingdom - Saul (1050), David (1010), Solomon (970)

Divided Kingdom - 930

Exile of Israel - 722

Exile of Judah - 586

Return of Judah - 538

3. Give a general outline of Old Testament history from the perspective of the covenant, including key passages.

Adamic - Gen 3

Noahic - Gen 9

Abrahamic - Gen 12, 15, 17

Mosaic - Ex 19-24, Deut

Davidic - 2 Sam 7, 1 Chr 17

New - Jer 31

SECTION III: OLD TESTAMENT (KEY PEOPLE)

*Discuss **briefly** the life and significance of the following. Include books(s) and chapter(s) as you are able.*

1. Adam

Gen 1-4 Romans 5

He was the first man

He was made in the image and likeness of God

He sinned against God

He is a type of Christ as representative of the human race

2. Abraham

Gen. 11-25, Romans 4 and Hebrews 11

He was from Ur of Chaldeans

He was a Patriarch of Israel

God promised to bless all the nations through him

He is mentioned in the NT in relationship with faith

3. Joseph

Gen. 37-50 and Heb. 11

He was the son of Jacob and Rachel

He was sold by his brothers as a slave

He worked for Potiphar, and he fled temptation

He interpreted dreams

He was an instrument in God's hand to rule Egypt

4. Moses

Ex. 1- Deut. 34, Heb. 11

He is the author of the Pentateuch

He was rescued as an infant from Pharaoh

He was used by God to lead his people out of the bondage and slavery of Egypt to the wilderness towards the promised land

He only saw the promised land but did not enter it because he doubted God in Meribah

5. Deborah

Judges 4-5

She was a prophet and judge of Israel

She helped to deliver her people from Jabin and Sisera

6. Ruth

Book of Ruth

She was a Moabite

She was the daughter in law of Naomi

She was the wife of Boaz

She was the great grandmother of David

She was an ancestor of Christ

7. Joshua

Deut. 31, Joshua

He was the successor of Moses after he died

He was the general who led the conquest to the promised land because he trusted God's promises

8. Gideon

Judg. 6-8

He was a good judge

He delivered his people from Midian

He received the name of Jerubaal

9. Samuel

1 Sam. 1-15

He was the son of Hannah

He was a prophet and the last judge of Israel
He anointed Saul and David as kings

10. David

1 Sam. 12 – 1 Kings 2:11

He was a great statesman and general

He was a king of Israel

He united the tribes of Israel

He made preparations for the temple but Solomon completed it.

He was an ancestor of Christ

11. Solomon

1 Kings 1-11

He was the son of David and Bathsheba

He was the king of the united Israel for 40 years after his father David

Wisdom and sin stand out in his life

He was an ancestor of Christ

12. Rehoboam

1 Kings 11,12, 14

He was the son of Solomon

When he was king 10 tribes revolted from him

He set up the Kingdom of Judah in the south

He was an ancestor of Christ

13. Jeroboam, Son of Nebat

1 Kings 11-14

Bad king of Israel

He was the first king of Israel after the division of the kingdom

He led the people of Israel into idolatry

He reigned for 22 years

14. Elijah

1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2

He was a great prophet of God

He strenuously opposed idolatry

King Ahab was his enemy

He was caught up on a chariot of fire at death

15. Elisha

1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 2-6

He was a great prophet of God

He was the successor of Elijah

He held the office of prophet for 55 years

16. Hezekiah

2 Kings 18-20

He was a good king of Judah

He was the 12th king of Judah

He instituted religious reforms and improved the overall safety and prosperity of the nation during his reign

He was an ancestor of Christ

17. Josiah

2 Kings 22-23

He was a good king of Judah

He became a king at the age of 8 years old

The book of the law was re-discovered during his reign

He was an ancestor of Christ

18. Jeremiah

Book of Jeremiah

He covered the reign of the last five kings of kingdom of Judah

He denounced the policies of his nation

19. Ezekiel

Book of Ezekiel

He was a prophet from a priestly family

He was taken captive to Babylon

He prophesied to the exiles in Mesopotamia by the river Kebar

20. Daniel

Book of Daniel

He was a prophet during the time of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus

His wisdom and faith earned him a position under Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.

21. Nehemiah

Book of Nehemiah

He was the governor of Jerusalem

He helped to rebuild the walls of the city

22. Malachi

Book of Malachi

He is the last prophet recorded in the OT

He was a contemporary of Nehemiah

SECTION IV: OLD TESTAMENT (KEY PASSAGES)

Locate the following passages by book:

1. Passover

Ex. 12-13

2. Day of Atonement

Lev. 16

3. The Shema

Deut. 6

4. Watchman

Ezekiel 3 and 33

5. New Covenant

Jer. 31

6. "I will pour out my Spirit"

Joel 2

7. "The just shall live by faith"

Hab. 4:2

8. I am going to send my messenger"

Mal. 3

SECTION V: OLD TESTAMENT (KEY EVENTS)

Locate key events by book/chapter:

1. Creation

Gen 1-2

2. Fall

Gen. 3

3. Flood

Gen 6

4. Babel

Gen 11

5. Promise to Abraham

Gen 12

6. Sign of Abrahamic Covenant

Gen 17

7. Jacob wrestling with the angel

Gen 32

8. The Exodus

Gen. 12-14

9. Fall of Jericho

Josh 6

10. The anointing of David

1 Sam 16

11. Davidic Covenant

2 Sam 17

12. Dedication of the Temple

1 Kings 8

13. Division of the Kingdom

1 Kings 12

14. The Exile

2 Kings 25

15. The return from the exile

Ezra 1-2

SECTION VI: NEW TESTAMENT (GENERAL)

1. Name the general divisions of the New Testament and the books in each.

Gospels – Matt, Mark, Luke, John

History – Acts

Pauline Epistles – Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2

Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Catholic Epistles – Hebrews James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John, Jude

Apocalyptic -Revelations

a. Which are the “Prison Epistles?”

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

b. Which are the “Pastoral Epistles?”

1-2 Timothy, Titus

c. Which are the “Catholic (or General) Epistles?”

Hebrews James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John, Jude, (Revelations)

2. What are the distinctive features of each of the four gospels?

Matthew – The author of the gospel of Matthew wants to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah and at the same time the author teaches obedience to Jesus’ commands.

The gospel of Matthew is more Jewish than the others and used a lot of OT quotes stressing the relationship of Jesus with the OT.

Mark – He presents the work, person and teaching of Jesus. This is the shortest of the four gospels. When we study this gospel, we can read more on the actions than on the teaching of Christ.

Luke – The gospel of Luke presents an accurate account of the life of Christ, presenting Jesus as the perfect man and Savior. This is the most comprehensive of the gospels and he placed emphasis on prayer, wealth and women.

John – John wants to prove decisively that Jesus in fact is the son of God and eternal life can only be found through him. The author of this gospel places emphasis on Christ’s relationship with the Father and teaches the importance of believing in Christ. There is a lot of teaching in this gospel but not a lot of details of Jesus’ life.

3. Outline the life of Christ.

I. Preparation:

1. Birth- Bethlehem (Mt 2)
2. Trip to Egypt (Mt. 2)
3. Trip to Temple (Lk. 2)

II. Public Ministry (began AD 26 or 28)

A. Year One- Judea/ Galilee (relative obscurity)

4. Baptism (Matt. 3)
5. Temptation (Mt.4)
6. Ministry Begins (Mt)

B. Year Two- Galilee (popularity grows)

7. Call of apostles (Mt. 10)
8. Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7)
9. Kingdom Parables (Mt. 13)

10. Apostles sent out (Mt. 10)

C. Year Three- Galilee/ Judea (adversity/ opposition)

11. Feeding 5000 (Jn. 6)

12. Peter's Confession (Mt. 16)

13. Transfiguration (Mt. 17)

14. Raises Lazarus (Jn 11)

III. Passion week in Jerusalem

15. Triumphal Entry (Mt. 21)

16. Last Supper (Mt.26)

17. High Priestly Prayer (Jn 17)

18. Crucifixion (Mt. 27)

19. Resurrection (Mt. 28, Lk. 24)

20. Ascension (Lk 24, Acts 1)

a. Name, locate, and briefly discuss three of Jesus' parables.

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 is one of the best-known parables of Jesus. In this parable we learn the importance of having a heart so full of love and mercy that when someone needs us, we do not focus on their race, religion or social class. Love for God will move us to action, and we will love that person as ourselves.

The parable of the Good Samaritan was Jesus' response to a teacher of the law who asked him who his neighbor was. Instead of giving him the answer, Jesus told him that story so that he himself could reflect on and discover it.

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-31 speaks of God's mercy for repentant sinners and sincere joy at the conversion of the wayward. In this parable Jesus made an allegory about the conversion of sinners and the forgiveness of sins and the grace of God for sinners.

The parable of the lost sheep from Luke 15:1-7. All the publicans and sinners came to Jesus to hear him, and the Pharisees and scribes murmured that Jesus received sinners and ate with them. Jesus explains that God does not welcome the lost with displeasure. Instead, he looks for them just like the shepherd goes to find the lost sheep. God finds the sinner.

b. Name, locate, and briefly discuss three of Jesus' miracles.

We can read of the healing of the paralytic in Luke 5:17-26

In the passage we see the miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ healing a paralyzed man, demonstrating the great power and great authority that Jesus has, not only to heal the paralyzed man but also to forgive his sins.

Jesus feeding the 5000.

In this miracle we not only see how Jesus teaches but also the compassion he has for the people who are there to listen to him. Jesus once again shows his power despite the lack of faith on the part of the disciples. Here he demonstrates that he is the bread of life and that in him we have plenty.

Raising Lazarus from the dead

We can find this miracle in John 14. In this miracle we see the power and authority of Jesus over death, we see his compassion for the consequences of sin in this fallen world when he cries, showing us love and mercy.

4. What are the basic elements found in each of the sermons recorded in Acts?

References and quotes of the OT

Jesus proclaimed as the promised Messiah

A call to repent and believe

A cultural sensibility to the audience

5. Relate the writing of the Pauline epistles to the life of Paul.

Paul's letter to the Romans was the only letter written to a church or individual whom he had not yet visited. He wrote them expressing his intention to visit them, and affirming them in their faith.

Paul's other letters included Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, and these letters were written while he was in prison. He also wrote 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Galatians to churches he had visited. Then his pastoral letters are 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus, and they were written to men he had ministered with.

6. Locate and discuss at least two passages which deal with law and grace.

Romans 3:19-31

This discusses that we cannot be justified based on our own works under the law because we can never perfectly obey the law.

It also talks about the law opening our eyes to see sin.

We can only be justified by faith in Christ through the grace of God.

Romans 6:15

This verse discusses whether we should intentionally sin since we are now under grace. Paul uses the language of slavery, saying we are no longer slaves to sin, but instead are slaves to righteousness.

SECTION VII: NEW TESTAMENT (KEY PEOPLE)

Discuss briefly the significance of the following. Include book(s) and chapter(s) where relevant.

1. Herod the Great

Matt. 2

He was the king at Jesus' birth, the magi visited him looking for Jesus. He gave orders to kill all the infants under 2 years old after the magi did not return to tell him where they found Jesus.

2. Herod Antipas

Matt 14

He imprisoned and executed John the Baptist for saying that his second marriage was unlawful. He encountered Jesus when he was sent by Pilate to Herod.

3. Pharisees

Matt 23 and throughout the gospels

They were full of pride and considered themselves the true Israel

They insisted that they had preserved and interpreted the law

They believed the life of faith was obedience to the law

4. Sadducees

Mark 12 and through the gospels

This group had a strong adherence to biblical authority

They denied resurrection and angels

They were priestly, aristocratic, and wealthy people.

They were the governing party of the religious establishment.

5. The Apostles (name them)

They were called and appointed by Jesus, to preach and share the gospel, to perform miracles and to baptize. They were the leaders of the early church and all of them were martyred except John.

Simon Peter

Andrew

James son of Zebedee

John

Thaddaeus

Phillip

Bartholomew
Thomas
Matthew
James –son of Alpheus
Simon the Zealot
Judas – He was replaced by Matthias

6. Peter
Matt 14, 16, 26, Acts, Petrine Epistles
He was a disciple of Jesus
He walked on the water with Jesus
He was part of the inner circle
He denied Jesus and repented
He preached at Pentecost
He was a key leader of the early church

7. Cornelius
Acts 10
Centurion and devout God fearer, he gave generously to the needy.
He had a vision where an angel of God told him to send for Peter who was at that time in Joppa.
The Lord confirmed this request to Peter in a vision and Peter went to Cornelius in Caesarea.
When Peter was speaking to his household the Holy Spirit came upon all the people of the household that had heard the message and all were baptized. A confirmation for the Jews that the gospel would go to the gentiles.

8. Barnabas
Acts 11, 13, 15
Also known as Joseph from Cyprus
He was a Levite; he sold a field and gave the profit to the church.
Barnabas was sent by a church in Jerusalem to Antioch where ministered. He went to Tarsus to find Paul and brought him to the church at Antioch. He was sent out by the church at Antioch with Paul as missionary to Gentiles. Later disagreed with Paul over Mark and the two went their separate ways.

9. Stephen
Acts 6-7
He was one of the first deacons.
He was seized by members of the Synagogue of Freedmen who brought him before the Sanhedrin.
After testifying about Jesus before the Sanhedrin, Stephen was stoned to death.
Stephen is the first recorded martyr of the early church.

10. Paul
Acts 7, 9, 13, 28 and Pauline Epistles
He was a roman citizen, well educated as a Pharisee under Gamaliel.

He persecuted the church as a member of the Sanhedrin
He was confronted by Christ on the Damascus Road and converted
3 missionary journeys – 1st Barnabas, 2nd Silas, 3rd he returned to Jerusalem and was imprisoned
and eventually sent to Rome
He wrote 13 NT books (epistles)

11. Timothy

Acts 16-18; 1-2 Tim.

His father was Greek, but his mother was a Jew. He joined the Apostle Paul on his second missionary journey

We read that Paul describes him as his true son in the faith

Timothy carried on the ministry in Macedonia, Ephesus, and Corinth.

12. James

Matt. 13; Epistle of James

He was the brother of Jesus who initially did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah.

He saw the resurrected Christ

James Became a leader in the church at Jerusalem and presided over the Jerusalem council (Ac. 15).

He suffered martyrdom by stoning at the instigation of the high priest at the time.

He was the author of the Epistle of James.

SECTION VIII: NEW TESTAMENT (KEY PASSAGES)

Where in the Scriptures (book and chapter) would we find:

1. Birth of Jesus (shepherds)

Luke 2

2. Birth of Jesus (wise men)

Matt 1- 2

3. Baptism of Jesus

Matt 3

4. Temptation of Jesus

Matt 4

5. Sermon on the Mount

Matt 5-7

6. The Lord's Prayer
Matt 6, Luke 11
7. "Take my yoke"
Matt 11:28-30
8. Parables of the Kingdom
Matt 13, Luke 8
9. Prodigal Son
Luke 15
10. Caesarea Philippi
Matt 16, Luke 9
11. "I will build my church"
Matt 16:18
12. Transfiguration
Matt 17
13. Mary and Martha
Luke 10, John 11
14. Correcting a brother
Matt 18
15. Keys to the kingdom
Matt 16:19
16. Two Great Commands
Matt 22, Mark 12
17. The Comforter
John 16
18. "You must be born again"
John 3
19. Woman at the well
John 4
20. Way, truth, and life
John 14:6
21. Feeding of the 5,000

John 6

22. The Vine

John 15

23. Good Shepherd

John 10

24. High priestly prayer

John 17

25. Triumphal entry to Jerusalem

Matt 21

26. Last Supper

Matt 26

27. Death of Christ (event)

Matt 27, Luke 23

28. Resurrection of Christ (event)

Matt 28, Luke 24

29. Ascension of Christ

Luke 24, Acts 1

30. Great Commission

Matt 28

31. The sermons of Acts

2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26

32. Pentecost

Acts 2

33. Conversion of Paul

Acts 9

34. Apollos

Acts 18

35. Jerusalem Council

Acts 15

36. Missionary journeys

1st 13-14

2nd 15-18

3rd 18-21

37. Philippian jailer
Acts 16

38. Bereans
Acts 17

39. Body as temple of Holy Spirit
1 Cor. 6

40. Love chapter
1 Cor. 13

41. Law as schoolmaster
Gal. 3

42. Fruit of the Spirit
Gal. 5

43. Armor of God
Eph. 6

44. The mind of Christ
Phil. 2

45. Pressing toward the mark
Phil. 3

46. Not grieving as those without hope
1 Thess. 4

47. "Man of Lawlessness"
2 Thess. 2

48. Fought the good fight
2 Tim. 4

49. The washings of the new covenant
Heb. 9

50. Melchizedek
Heb. 7

51. Not forsaking the assembly ourselves
Heb. 10

52. The chastening of those He loves
Heb. 12
53. Problems of unanswered prayers
James 4
54. Problems with the tongue
James 3
55. Living stones
1 Peter 2
56. The elect lady
2 John
57. The great white throne of judgement
Rev. 20
58. The millennium
Rev. 20

SECTION IX: NEW TESTAMENT (KEY TOPICS)

*Identify **at least** two passages (book, chapter) someone could read about on each of the topics below:*

1. Atonement
Matt 20:28, Rom. 3:25
2. Repentance
Matt. 4:17, Acts 2:37
3. Deity of Christ
Heb. 1:1-4, John 1
4. Resurrection (his and ours)
Matt 28, 1 Cor. 15
5. Return of Christ
Matt 24-25, 1 Thess 4-5
6. Speaking in tongues
Acts 2, 1 Cor. 14
7. Spiritual gifts
Rom 12, 1 Cor. 12

8. Civil government
Rom 13, 1 Peter 2

9. Work
1 Thess. 4, 2 Thess. 3

10. The ministry
Acts 20-21, 1 Timothy

11. The Church
Matt. 16:17-19, Acts 2

12. Qualifications for church officers
1 Timothy 3, Titus 1

13. Biblical discipline
1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2

14. Women in the church
1 Tim 2, Tit. 2

15. Giving
Matt. 6, Phil. 4

16. Money
Matt. 6, James 5

17. Marriage
Eph. 5, Col. 3

18. Divorce
Matt. 5, 1 Cor. 7

19. Family
Eph. 5, Col. 3

20. Heaven and hell
Reve. 20, Rev. 21

21. Reconciliation among believers
Matt 18, 1 Cor. 6

22. Suffering
James 1, 1 Peter 4

23. Resurrection of the body
Rom. 6:5, 1 Cor. 15

24. Infant baptism
Acts 2, Romans 4

25. Predestination
Rom. 8:28-30; Rom. 9

26. Unity of the Church (and gifts)
2 Cor. 12, Eph. 4

27. Christian Sabbath
Heb. 4:4, Rev. 1:10

28. Ordering of Christian worship
Col. 3:16, 2 Tim 4:2

29. Christian liberty
Act 10-11, Rom 6

30. Significance of the death of Christ
John 1:29, Rom. 5:6-8

BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER EXAM
HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY

NAME: Axel Sotelo

DATE OF EXAM: 10/31/2023

INSTRUCTIONS

The PCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* provides in 21-4c.: “Trials for ordination shall consist of...the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.” This exam begins the process of fulfilling that requirement.

- Email the exam back to the Chairman, Fred Greco at fred.greco@cckpca.org by the test schedule deadline. If saving a Word file append your last name to the file.
- Use the space provided to answer your questions. If you need extra space, add lines below your answer.
- This is **not** an open book or note exam. Outside resources are **not** allowed.
- Please use Scripture references to support your answers.
- Please do not email this examination to anyone else without explicit permission from the chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

QUESTIONS

Have you read the entire BCO? Yes No (circle one)

Are you aware of any of its principles about which you have reservations? If so, please explain. No

1. Who is the head of the church?
Jesus
2. What is the constitution of the PCA?
The Bible, WCF, WSC, WLC and BCO
3. List in order the sections of the BCO?
 - a. Preface
 - b. Government
 - c. Church Discipline
 - d. Directory of Worship
4. What is the visible church?

It is the visible kingdom of God for the gathering and perfecting of the saints.

5. Who are the members of the visible church?
Those who profess faith in Christ as their Savior and their children.
6. What two kinds of members does the church have?
Communicant and Non-Communicant
7. What is a particular church?
It is a number of professing believers who gather together to praise God and live a pious life, it has officers, with a permanent session, teaching elders, ruling elders and deacons, and their jurisdiction resides in the session of the church.
8. What is a mission church?
It is similar to the particular church, but they do not have a permanent governing body.
9. What permanent officers has Christ given his church?
Ruling Elders and Deacons.
10. What are the qualifications for an elder?
Elders have to be blameless, with a good testimony outside the church, they have to govern their home well, they have to be able to teach, and they must be healthy in the faith, exhibiting a sober and holy life.
11. How are ruling and teaching elders alike? How are they different?
They both govern with parity, but the teaching elders additionally read, expound and preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments.
12. What is meant by the “parity” of ruling and teaching elders?
Same, equal authority.
13. What are the duties of deacons?
Ministering to the sick, the friendless, the needy and distressed.
14. What are the qualifications for deacons?
Dignified, not excessive drinkers, not greedy, honest, he should be able to manage his house well and be truthful.
15. What are the courts of the PCA? What jurisdiction does each have?
Session – jurisdiction over the Church

Presbytery – jurisdiction over the sessions of the churches in their presbytery, and over the teaching elders in their presbytery

Presbytery – jurisdiction over all the PCA churches

16. Who are the members of the church session?

Teaching Elders (Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor) and Ruling Elders

17. What are the primary duties of the session?

Ensure proper worship and shepherding, examine and ordain officials, manage church property, ensure observance of lawful injunctions of higher courts and inquire into the Christian conduct of its members.

18. Who is the moderator of a session and on what grounds does he hold that position?

The Senior Pastor for prudential reasons.

19. The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly.

20. List the 5 Permanent Committees of the PCA General Assembly.

- a. Administrative Committee
- b. Committee of Discipleship Ministries
- c. MTW
- d. MNA
- e. RUF

21. List the 5 Agencies of the PCA General Assembly.

- a. Covenant College
- b. Covenant Seminary
- c. PCA Foundation
- d. Retirement and Benefits
- e. Ridgehaven

22. What is a committee of commissioners?

This commission is authorized to deliberate and conclude matters entrusted to it, and they make decisions on behalf of the court.

23. How do a committee of commissioners and a permanent committee or agency differ?

A committee of commissioners is not permanent, but deals with a single matter, and dissolves upon completion of business.

24. What is the difference between a committee and a commission?

A committee examines, considers, reports and makes recommendations to the court.

A commission concludes business referred to it.

25. What is a candidate? What BCO chapter explains this status?
The candidate is a member of the church, who believes that he has been called to Preach the Word of God and submits to the care of the presbytery. BCO 18
26. What is a licentiate? What BCO chapter explains this status?
A man who has been vetted by the presbytery who can preach regularly. BCO 19
27. In what areas is a prospective licentiate examined?
Bible, Theology and BCO
28. What is an intern? What BCO chapter explains this status?
A man who is tested for a year on his gifts and his ability to rule as a TE.
29. T F The session has the primary responsibility for the Christian nurture, education, and training of the children of the church.
30. T F Teaching and ruling elders are members of the presbytery within whose bounds their churches are to be found.
31. T F Since they are charged with overseeing the financial matters of the church, the deacons are responsible for adopting the church budget.
32. T F Ruling elders are to visit people in their homes, especially the sick.
33. T F A man who has been licensed by the presbytery may administer the sacraments if approved by the local session.
34. What is the process by which a church calls a new pastor?
Search committee is formed, Recommendation offered by the search committee, followed by a congregational meeting and vote
35. What is the difference between an assistant pastor and an associate pastor?
Assistant Pastor is called by the session and the Associate Pastor is called by the congregation
36. What is the process by which a church elects new officers?
Congregation nominates the candidate, session examines them, session informs eligibility of candidates for election, followed by a congregational meeting and vote.
37. How much notice must be given to call a congregational meeting?
A week's notice.

38. Who can vote at a congregational meeting?
Communicant members.
39. Who owns the property of the local church?
The local Church.
40. On what basis can a congregation withdraw from the PCA?
For whatever reasons it deems sufficient, the BCO permits a congregation to leave our denomination at any time it wishes to do so.
41. What can a Presbytery do to stop a congregation from withdrawing from the PCA?
Legally nothing, just trying to persuade them against the departure of the congregation from the PCA.
42. Can the BCO be amended? If so, how?
Yes, they need the majority of the votes at the GA, 2/3 of the votes of presbyteries and the majority of the votes in the next GA
43. Can the Westminster Standards (WCF, WLC, WSC) be amended? If so, how?
Yes, they need $\frac{3}{4}$ of the votes of the GA, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the votes of the presbyteries and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the votes in the next GA
44. What is the purpose of church discipline?
a. For the Glory of God
b. For the Purity of the Church
c. To maintain and reclaim the disobedient sinner.
45. List the types of censure that church court may give.
Admonition, suspension of the Lord's table, excommunication, suspension of office and deposition of office.
46. Define the following:
a. reference -- It is a written request to a higher court by a lower court for advice.
b. appeal -- It is moving the case from a lower court where a ruling has already been made to a higher court.
c. complaint -- It is a written complaint about a decision or act of a church tribunal.
47. What should happen when a member moves out of the community?
The member should transfer his membership to a new church
48. What should be done when a member neglects the church for more than one year?
This member should be removed from the roll and not be counted in the annual statistics.
49. What parts of the Directory For Worship have full constitutional authority (if any)?
56-58
50. With what subject(s) do those parts deal?

Baptism (including the baptism of infants and children), the Lord's Supper and the sealing ordinances

THEOLOGY EXAM HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY

NAME: Axel Sotelo

DATE OF EXAM: 10/27/2023

INSTRUCTIONS

The PCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* provides in 21-4c.: “Trials for ordination shall consist of...theology.” This exam begins the process of fulfilling that requirement.

- Email the exam back to the Chairman, Fred Greco at fred.greco@cckpca.org by the test schedule deadline. If saving a Word file, append your last name to the file.
- Use the space provided to answer your questions. If you need extra space, add lines below your answer.
- This is **not** an open book or note exam. Outside resources are **not** allowed.
- Please use Scripture references to support your answers.
- Please do not email this examination to anyone else without explicit permission from the chair of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

STATED DIFFERENCES

On a separate sheet of paper, please list and explain any differences you have with the Westminster Confession of Faith, Westminster Shorter Catechism and Westminster Larger Catechism. You may use the Standards and your Bible for this portion only. Please provide a Biblical rationale/defense for your difference **and** the Biblical rationale for the Westminster Standards' position (so we know you understand it).

SECTION I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Give an overview of Covenant Theology.
Covenant theology helps us understand the way God relates to mankind. Under covenant theology we see the Bible as telling one story of God dealing with his people based on covenant relationships. Covenant theology views God's acts of grace and man's unfaithful response, always being based on the unity of Scripture.
 - a. How would you refute the claim that Covenant Theology is an imposition on Scripture? (Support your answer with Scripture)
Covenant theology maintains the unity and continuity of the New and Old Testaments and the way God relates to his people in each.

Covenant theology is not an imposition on Scripture, but rather I would say it is an extraction from Scripture.

It demonstrates God's merciful actions towards his creation based on the covenant that is embedded throughout the biblical narrative. Covenant theology looks at the big picture and studies what God did from Genesis to Revelation. The covenant of works and covenant of grace essentially capture God's redemptive actions toward his creation based on this entire narrative.

Covenant of Works — Gen. 2

Covenant of Grace:

Adamic Gen. 3

Noahic Gen. 9

Abrahamic Gen. 12, 15, 17

Mosaic Ex. 19-24

Davidic 2 Sam. 7

New Covenant Jer. 31

Christ represents the better covenant Heb 8-10

2. Contrast the Reformed/Presbyterian understanding of how God has worked throughout redemptive history with the Dispensational understanding of how God has throughout redemptive history?

Dispensationalism sees the Scriptures unfolding in a series of dispensations. A dispensation can be defined as the particular means that God uses to deal with man and creation during a given period of redemptive history.

In contrast, Covenant Theology looks at the Scriptures through the lens of covenant. Covenant Theology defines two primary covenants: the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. All of the covenants described in the Scriptures are outlines of the covenant of works or the covenant of grace.

3. Defend the Five Points of Calvinism using Scripture.

The 5 points of Calvinism emerged as a response to the 5 Arminian points.

Total Depravity:

Since the Fall, humans have been enslaved to sin and are naturally inclined toward evil in every way.

Gen. 6:5

Unconditional election:

God's decision to save someone does not ultimately depend on anything about that person.

Rom. 8:28-30

Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption):

God intended Christ's atonement to secure the redemption of only the elect.

Matt. 1:21

Irresistible Grace:

God's special redeeming grace infallibly assures the salvation of those who receive it.

John 6:37-38

Perseverance of the Saints:

God's special redeeming grace will keep genuine converts faithful to Christ to the end.

Rom. 8:28-30

- a. How would you refute the claim that limited atonement diminishes the power of Christ's blood?

Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to pay for all sins, but the Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ came to save those the Father gave him. Those for whom he died will be brought to him. His death is sufficient for all and effective for the elect.

4. Define the Five Solas of the Reformation, and use Scripture to defend each one.

1. Sola scriptura: "Scripture alone." The Bible is the only source of authority for believers.

2 Peter 1:20-21

2. Sola fide: "Faith alone." Justification is only by the grace of God through faith. Sola Fide summarizes the truth that faith in Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient Savior, without the need for merits or works of one's own.

John 3:16

3. Sola gratia: "only Grace." Grace is the reason for our salvation and comes from what God has done.

Ephesians 2:8-9

4. Solo Christo: "Christ alone." Highlights the power of Christ in our salvation. We are saved only by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Hebrews 4:15

5. Soli Deo gloria: "only to the glory of God." The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. The glory belongs to God, not to us, since nothing about salvation comes from us or what we do, only from God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

5. Distinguish between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology.
Unlike systematic theology, which classifies doctrines according to specific themes, biblical theology shows the expression of God's revelation throughout history.

SECTION II: HOLY SCRIPTURE

6. The Scriptures are said to be 'self-authenticating.' What does this mean?
The Holy Scriptures show evidence within them of their own divine origin. Jesus himself confirmed the OT canon when he said that he came to fulfill the Law and the prophets.
7. How would you respond to those who assert that the early Church decided what writings would be included in the canon?
The early Church included books in the canon that have been inspired by God. These books must have certain criteria, apostolic origin, or have been recognized by the churches and have apostolic content in them.
8. Define and defend the canon of the Old and New Testaments.
The canon is the standard or measure of Scripture. These books are authoritative and inspired, and were given to the Church. The Canon is self attesting. Christ confirmed the OT canon when he said that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets. And Peter himself understood that the apostle Paul was writing Scripture as mentioned in his second epistle.
9. How would you refute the claim that the Reformers removed the deuterocanonical books from the Old Testament?
These books were not included because they were never in the original Hebrew canon, they are not inspired or recognized as inspired, and they teach incorrect catholic doctrines. The apocryphal books have certain similarities with inspired books, but they

were never received into the canon because they were not recognized as inspired as they did not meet the requirements of canonicity.

- a. What biblical texts would you use to justify the exclusion of the apocrypha from the Biblical canon?
Gal. 1:6-9
2 Tim 4:3

10. Define and defend these attributes of Scripture (cite Scripture):

- a. Authority
Scripture must be obeyed. 2 Tim 3
- b. Inspiration
2 Tim 3:16 reminds us that all Scripture is God breathed. The inspiration of Scripture implies a process in which God worked providentially through human authors.
- c. Inerrancy
The entire Bible and all its teachings are free from errors, but we have to keep in mind that it does not speak to every possible topic. Heb. 6 tells us that God does not lie.
- d. Infallibility
That the Scriptures are Infallible means that they cannot be wrong, that they never make mistakes, that they are absolutely trustworthy because we have a perfect God. Heb. 6:18
- e. Necessity
Necessity of Scripture is that if humans are to properly understand their condition before God they can only find it in Scripture, since in it we find all the things necessary for his glory, for the salvation of man, faith and life. Rom 1 reminds us that it is the power of God for Salvation.
- f. Sufficiency
Everything we need for salvation and godliness is found in the Scriptures as we find it in 2 Tim 3.
- g. Perspicuity
The knowledge of saving faith is found in the Scriptures that anyone who earnestly searches can find knowledge for themselves without the need for a priest. 2 Tim 3

11. How would you respond to a congregant who says that Scripture has been corrupted, and is therefore unreliable?

I would comment to my brother in faith that we have a perfect God and that he himself teaches us in his Word that his Word is worthy of trust.

Yes, perhaps our Bible translations have errors; but they are human and minimal errors and those errors do not affect the main teachings of the Christian faith. In fact, the Bible is incredibly reliable.

12. What principles should guide our interpretation of any given passage of Scripture?

Scripture interprets Scripture and less clear passages need to be read in light of clearer passages.

SECTION III: THEOLOGY PROPER

13. What is God?

God is Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, justice and truth.

14. Using Scripture, define and defend the doctrine of the Trinity.

There are 3 persons in the Godhead the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The three are one God, the 3 are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. Mat. 28:19 and Det. 6:4

15. Describe the work of each person of the Trinity in the economy of salvation.

It is the Heavenly Father who sent his Son into the world for our redemption. He, the Son acquired our redemption for us through his sacrifice on the cross. It is the Holy Spirit who applies that redemption to us. God covenanted with his Son to give him a people for himself; the Son agreed to atone for the sins of his people, and the Holy Spirit agreed to apply the redemption purchased by Christ to his people.

16. Define each of the following divine attributes, and identify at least one implication of each attribute. [e.g. The fact that God is omnipotent means that He is all-powerful, and implies there is nothing of which He is incapable.]

a. Infinitude

To say that God is infinite is to recognize that he is not limited to the restrictions of the universe. The essence of God has no limits and there is nothing beyond him or his control.

b. Eternality

God is eternal means that he is perpetual, having neither beginning nor end. He's not bound by time like us, and there is nothing that came before him, neither will anything come after him.

c. Omnipresence/Immensity

It means that God is present everywhere at the same time, this is an attribute of God alone; since he is not bound by space or time, he is present in all places at all times and there is never a time that we can be outside of his presence.

d. Immutability

God is unchanging in his nature, his perfections, his purposes, his promises and his blessings. No matter the circumstances of the world or of our individual lives, God is still the same all the time.

e. Justice

God is just, meaning He is perfectly fair in His dealings with His creatures. God shows no partiality because he is the perfect judge.

f. Personal

God has attributes typical of a person, with whom it is possible to establish a relationship. He is a personal God, he relates to us, loves us and cherishes us.

g. Simplicity

The simplicity of God means that God is perfect in unity, without composition or division. God is his attributes and not made of parts. Nothing can be taken away from him or added to him.

h. Holiness

The holiness of God is the attribute par excellence that reveals the great distance between the Sovereign and the subject. God has ethical and moral perfection.

i. Omniscience

God is omniscient because He knows all things or has all knowledge since He is the creator of the universe. There is nothing that can happen outside of this knowledge, and nothing can be hidden from him.

- j. Aseity
God's aseity is his independence, his own existence. In another word it's the non-dependence on something or someone since he is self-sufficient and self-existent.
- 17. Does God undergo any relational or emotional changes as a result of interaction with His creatures?
We have an unchangeable God and since God is unchangeable by definition, he cannot have passions. God moves, but He is not moved as a result of interaction with His creatures, rather it is according to His eternal plan.
- 18. Is God a composition of His various divine attributes?
No, he is not a composition of his attributes. Instead he is his attributes.

SECTION IV: ANTHROPOLOGY

- 19. What is the chief end of man?
To glorify God and enjoy him forever.
- 20. How did God create man?
God created male and female after his own image, righteousness and holiness with dominion over the creatures.
 - a. How does the Biblical teaching of the creation of human beings conflict with present day understandings of human sexuality and gender?
God created the human being man and woman in his image and likeness, this is very clear, and there are no other genders. Sin has corrupted man and has deviated from what God originally stipulated.
 - b. How does this inform our understanding of the dignity of all human beings, irrespective of race or gender?
Like the Trinity, ontological equality but diversity of roles, both male and female reflect the image of God in a unique way.

All people have a special value that is not tied to their race or gender or any other factor, simply because they were created in the image and likeness of God. The words of Genesis 1:26 that God created humanity in his image and likeness give us the key to understanding this. The teaching that man is the image and likeness of God is absolutely fundamental to a Christian understanding of the nature of the human being, the dignity and worth of the person and to all Christian ethics.

21. Do you believe that Adam was an historical figure? If so, do you believe that God directly created Adam from the dust of the earth, rather than by inserting a soul into a pre-existing hominid or ape? Defend your answer biblically. Part of what gives us dignity as people is the fact that we are made in the image of God as we read in Genesis 1:27 since Adam and Eve were created from the dust of the earth, and then Eve from Adam; and we as descendants of them follow in this pattern.

After the creation narrative, we find the fall of man, the entering of sin into God's perfect creation. The accounts of Adam are presented as real historical events in this history of the beginning, and it explains both how God created the world and all that is in it, and also how sin entered into the picture (Gen 3). In the NT, the Apostle Paul refers to Adam's sin in explaining our relationship with sin, and then explaining our relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam. Paul treats this account as a historical event.

We live in a world where it is difficult to accept the historicity of Adam; it may seem outdated and irrational to many. We must remember the infallibility of Scripture, the testimony of the church, human dignity, the reality of universal sin, and the justice brought by Jesus. The historicity of Adam directly affects the message of the gospel.

- a. What are a couple of ramifications of your answer to the previous question? If Adam was not a historical figure then we would have a very big problem, as Paul wrote in Romans that in the first Adam everyone died but in the second Adam who is Christ, all shall be made alive. This statement would not make any sense if Adam was not a historical figure.
22. Explain the difference between dichotomy and trichotomy. In your opinion, which position best reflects the teaching of Scripture?
Trichotomy maintains that man is composed of soul, body and spirit.

Dichotomy are those who maintain that man is only composed of body and spirit/soul – where spirit and soul are interchangeable words that indicate the same meaning.

The Scriptures speak of man as a unity between his parts, that is, formed from dust, but with the breath of life, however, man is not two parts, but is one made up of two parts. . The dichotomy for me reflects the teachings of Scripture. The Scriptures do not tell us any specification of the parts of man despite using different words, therefore, it is better to take all those words as synonyms, understanding that they can be used interchangeably, just as the dichotomy suggests.

23. Is evolution compatible with Scripture? Why or why not?

In the Genesis account, God deliberately creates things according to their kind, whereas the theory of evolution indicates a random process that causes one species to evolve into another. The Scriptures are clear and describe an intricately ordered process, not randomness, so this is incompatible with evolution. The Scriptures also describe an immediate response to the creative word of God and not slow changes over time. There is no indication that the descriptions of creation are metaphorical or not meant to be taken literally.

a. What about Theistic Evolution? Justify your answer with Scripture.

Theistic evolutionists attempts to combine secular theories of modern science with biblical theism. The problem with this is that it undermines the historicity of Genesis 1 and 2, which teach how God created the world and everything that is in it. Theistic evolution is therefore undermining faith itself. The Psalms contain many verses praising God for his glory and power demonstrated through his creation, and even Psalm 19 says that creation proclaims the work of his hands. There is no reference in these verses that there was a process of evolution. God spoke, and the everything came into existence.

24. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?

When God created man, he made a covenant of life with him, under the condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil under the penalty of death.

25. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

Eating the forbidden fruit.

- a. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?
The covenant with Adam was not only for himself, but also for all his posterity. The entire human race descended from Adam by ordinary generation, and therefore sinned and fell into his first transgression.
- b. If so, how did this come about?
Because God's covenant with Adam was for him and all his descendants. Adam was the representative of the human race.

26. What is original sin?

Original sin is Adam's first sin, the lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his entire nature.

- a. Do all humans have it?
Yes.
- b. Why is the focus on Adam's sin, and not on Eve's?
Because he was the representative of the human race.
- c. Distinguish between the Reformed and the Arminian understanding of original sin.
The Reformed believe that since humanity's fall into sin, all human beings have inherited a sinful nature.
Adam was created with the ability to perfectly obey the will of God. God created Adam in his own image and likeness, and as a mirror of God's goodness, righteousness, and holiness.
Arminians believe that Adam's sin resulted in the rest of humanity inheriting the inclination to sin, the sin nature. This sinful nature causes us to sin, so we are not responsible for Adam's sin, but only for our own.

27. Distinguish between the guilt and the corruption of sin.

Sin can be by commission or omission. Where sin is the cause, guilt is the effect. It is the consequence of having committed a sin. The corruption of sin has changed our perception of what is good or bad, and cannot fully comprehend God and his righteousness and justice.

28. Is there any difference between the way Jesus experienced temptation, and the way fallen human beings experience temptation?

Our Lord Jesus has both human and divine nature. But these two natures were never mixed or confused. At no time in the life of our Jesus did his human nature receive a small dosis of his divine nature that would make him resist special pressures in life or be immune to temptation. No, our Lord Jesus knows what it is to be tempted as we read in Hebrews 4, that he was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he was without sin.

We are tempted by our own sinful desires, however, and Jesus is not, since He does not have sinful desires like we do. Whereby Jesus was able to act as our substitute on the cross because He was clean from sin and spotless, living the perfect life that the first Adam could not live.

29. Are fallen desires, in themselves, sinful, or do they only result in sin if when acted upon?
Our own sinful desires guide us to sinful actions and all those desires are part of the flesh. Our Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that the desire to sin is also sinful. Sin is not only in actions but in the heart, in sinful desires, because that is where all sin comes from.
- a. Must one repent of unwanted illicit desires (e.g. sexual desire or attraction for a person of the same sex), even if they are not acted upon?
Definetely! James 1, talks about sinful desires, and Jesus said in Matthew that when a man looks at a woman with lust, a sin has already been committed.
 - b. What if the impure thoughts or desires arise in us prior to and apart from a conscious act of the will? Are they still sin? Or would they more properly be characterized as “weaknesses”, “inclinations to sin”, or “disordered desires”, without, in fact, being idolatrous and sinful?
Even this is sin because it comes from our heart, from our sinful nature.
30. Is fallen man capable of doing good works?
No, not in faith for the glory of God.
31. Does fallen man have free will?
Yes, his will is sinful and therefore only will choose evil.
32. Describe the four different states in which humans were or will be found.

Able to sin, able not to sin
Not able not to sin
Able not to sin
Unable to sin

33. How would you refute the claim that unless man can freely choose to obey or disobey God, he cannot truly love God?
Only when the Holy Spirit transforms our hearts and our wills are renewed and in this way we choose not to sin, if not our will is sinful and therefore only chooses sin.

SECTION V: CHRISTOLOGY

34. Who is the redeemer of God's elect?
The only Redeemer of God's elect is our Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal son of God, became man and thus was and continues to be forever, God and man in two different natures and one person.
35. Describe the person of Christ.
The Messiah, the anointed one. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal son of God, became man and thus was and continues to be forever, God and man in two different natures and one person, set apart to save God's people.
36. Is salvation exclusively through Christ?
Yes, no other way is possible. We read in John 14, no one comes to the Father except through Christ
Acts 4:12, there is no other name by which we may be saved
- a. Why is Christ alone uniquely able to save?
Because our Lord Jesus Christ is the redeemer, He stood in the place of sinners and provided them in his saving death and resurrection with everything that God requires for forgiveness of sin and with his sacrificial death he satisfied the wrath of God, and God the Father publicly approved the work accomplished in raising him from the dead. God's eternal Plan of Redemption was fulfilled by Christ.
37. Why is the incarnation important?
The doctrine of the Incarnation says more than just that Jesus is God. It is also declaring that God became human and, in doing so, became the bridge by which humanity was restored in communion with God that was lost in the fall. The Incarnation is the revelation of God, humanity and salvation.

The incarnation is where the eternal second person of the Trinity takes upon Himself a human nature and unites this divine nature to the human nature for the purpose of redemption.

- a. Could Christ have assumed an adult body and gone straight to the cross to save us? Explain your answer.
No. Because it was part of his humiliation of being born, and thus, in a condition of lowliness, subject to the law, suffering the miseries of this life, in order to fulfill God's plan.

38. Describe the key Christological controversies, and how they were resolved, at:

- a. The Council of Nicaea
Arianism (that Jesus Christ was the first created being and not eternal) – resolved through the Doctrine of the Trinity/Nicene Creed
- b. The Council of Chalcedon
The nature of Christ (Eutyches believed that Jesus only had one nature that was a mixture of the divine and human) – resolved in the Chalcedonian Creed that Jesus Christ was one person with two natures

39. Where can we find Christ in the Old Testament?

- Genesis 3 Crush head of serpent
- Numbers 24 Star will come out of Jacob
- 2 Samuel 7 Descendant of David will reign over God's people
- Psalm 110 Priest
- Isaiah 53 Suffering servant
- Jeremiah 31 New Covenant
- Micah 5 Ruler of Israel will come from Bethlehem
- Zechariah 6 Branch shall rebuild temple
- Malachi 3 Messenger will prepare the way for him

40. Define the offices of Christ, and explain how He executes them.

Prophet -- Revealing to us through his Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation.

Priest -- By having offered himself as a sacrifice, once, to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, and by continually interceding for us.

King – Subduing us to himself, ruling and defending us and in restraining and defeating both his and our enemies.

41. Even though Jesus did not sin while on earth, was it at least possible for Him to have sinned, had His circumstances been different? Defend your answer.

No. Since before the creation of the universe our Lord Jesus Christ was designated to be the spotless, sinless and the perfect sacrificial lamb to reconcile God and man, so even considering the possibility that Christ could have sinned is simply unbiblical, since our Lord always was, is and will forever be impeccable.

SECTION VI: SOTERIOLOGY

42. Define the following covenants. Describe where they can be found (explicitly or implicitly) in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

a. The Covenant of Redemption

Before foundation of the world God covenanted with his Son to give him a people for himself; the Son agreed to pay for the sins of his people, and the Holy Spirit agreed to apply the redemption purchased by Christ to his people.

b. The Covenant of Works

In Genesis 2 God allows Adam to eat of everything but he forbids him to eat of tree of knowledge of good and evil. It is the covenant where Adam represents not only himself, but his descendants, all people. Adam represents humanity.

c. The Covenant of Grace

God had told Adam he would die on the day they ate of the fruit; instead he gives a promise in Gen 3:15 that a descendant of Eve would ultimately defeat the serpent. The Covenant of Grace starts with God not immediately destroying Adam and Eve. We see in the Bible how the Covenant of Grace unfolds progressively through Old Testament and culminates in Jesus Christ; each unfolding gives more detail of the coming consummation.

43. How would you refute the claim that it is not fair that God punishes us for Adam's sin? Adam was the representative of the human race, and was created in God's likeness, knowledge, justice and holiness and free will. The covenant that God made with him was

not only for him but for all of his posterity. Adam did not fulfill this covenant with God, and therefore the rest of the human race was affected. But Jesus Christ fulfilled the covenant perfectly and offers salvation to us, and paid a price for sin that was not his own, and if we consider this act of great love, it also was not fair, as he had not sinned. Yet just as through one man there is condemnation, through another there is salvation and forgiveness.

44. Define the following terms:

- a. Penal Substitutionary Atonement
Jesus Christ took the full punishment we deserved for our sins as a substitute in our place that we may receive righteousness from God.
- b. Expiation
A sacrifice to remove sin and guilt
- c. Propitiation
A sacrifice to satisfy God's wrath
- d. Imputation
A crediting of something to another person. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.
- e. Effectual Calling
The inward calling of the Holy Spirit who regenerated us and grants us faith.
- f. Justification
It is an act of the free grace of God by which he forgives all our sins and accepts us righteous in his sight, only by virtue of the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us and which we receive only by faith.
- g. Sanctification
It is the work of God's free grace, through which we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.
- h. Adoption
Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, by which we are received into the number of the children of God and entitled to all their privileges.

- i. **Glorification**
Glorification is the final benefit of our redemption. Glorification is sanctification, our renewal after the image of Christ, made perfect.
 - j. **Christ's State of Humiliation**

His humiliation consisted in being born, and this, in a condition of lowliness, subject to the law, suffering the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross; having been buried and remaining under the power of death for some time
 - k. **Christ's State of Exaltation**
His exaltation consists of having risen from the dead on the third day, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and coming on the last day to judge the world.
45. According to the Bible, why is faith the sole means by which sinners are savingly united to Christ?
It is through faith that we believe in the Word of God, in the promises of God and receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation and this faith comes from the Holy Spirit, not from us, because our faith is what rests and unites us. to Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sins and rose again on the third day for our justification.
46. What is the relationship between savingly trusting in Jesus Christ and good works, according to Scripture?
Salvation is by faith alone, but true saving faith will produce good fruit.
47. How many imputations are discussed in the Bible, and what are they?
1) Adam's sin imputed to all his descendants
2) Believer's sin imputed to Christ
3) Christ's righteousness imputed to Christians
48. Explain the difference between progressive sanctification and definitive sanctification?
Definitive sanctification is a one-time act of God to break the bondage of sin in the lives of believers.
On the other hand, progressive sanctification is the continuous work of God's grace through which the Holy Spirit allows the regenerate to put sin to death more and more in their lives.

49. Distinguish between the active and passive obedience of Christ. Why are each important?
Jesus' active obedience consisted of keeping God's law perfectly throughout His life. His passive obedience consisted of His voluntary receipt of the punishment that sinners deserved.

SECTION VII: PNEUMATOLOGY

50. Is the Holy Spirit a person? Use Scripture to defend your answer.
Yes, He is the third person of the Trinity. He and the Father and Son are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. The Holy Spirit is not a thing, He is "He". The Scriptures refer to Him as a Person. Jesus in John 15 says, "When the Comforter comes, whom I will send from the Father, that is, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me." He is not some kind of essence, He is a person. Romans 8 tells us that "He" intercedes for us, has personal characteristics, and he is mentioned in the Bible as a person and performs actions in a personal way.
51. What did the Holy Spirit do before Pentecost?
Before the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, a person could not be born again without the work of the Holy Spirit in that person. The Holy Spirit did the work of regeneration before as he does now. The Holy Spirit dwelt in people in the old covenant just as he does now. The Holy Spirit worked for the sanctification of the saints in the Old Testament, just as He does for us now.
52. How is the Holy Spirit active in the worship service?
The Holy Spirit leads and speaks to us during the worship service.

SECTION VIII: ESCHATOLOGY

53. What is realized eschatology, and why is it important?
Realized eschatology refers to the fact of considering that the biblical prophecies have already been fulfilled in their entirety and is important because it deals with the realization and consummation of God's sovereign plan consummated in Christ Jesus.

54. What happens to believers and unbelievers after they die?

For the unbelievers their souls are cast into hell and their bodies stay in the grave until the resurrection.

For the believers, their souls are made perfect in holiness and they go to glory, and their bodies being united with Christ rest in their graves until the resurrection.

55. Is Hell a real place?

Yes, Matt 25 talks of Hell as a real place

a. What about purgatory?

No such place!! Either glory or Hell.

56. Describe the following views of the millennium:

a. Premillennial

Premillennialism refers to the belief that the second coming of Christ will occur before the millennium.

b. Postmillennial

Postmillennialists believe that the return of Christ, after the millennium, will be a golden age when most of the world will convert to Christianity. Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the millennium, which is preceded by a great tribulation.

c. Amillennial

Amillennialism views Christ's first coming as the inauguration of the kingdom, and his return as the consummation of the kingdom. Satan has already been bound and defeated.

57. Which of these views do you hold?

Amillennial

SECTION IX: ECCLESIOLOGY

58. Define the following terms:

- a. The Visible Church
All of those who claim to be followers of Christ.
- b. The Invisible Church
The invisible church encompasses all those who are truly followers of Christ. It is the true church, the one that only God can see.
- c. The Church Militant
- d. The church militant means that the Church here on earth ready to fight the good fight, is not only ready for battle but is also always engaged in war against evil, the flesh, the world and sin.
- e. The Church Triumphant
Those chosen ones who have already fought the good fight, who have finished their race and gone to glory with the Lord.

59. What are the marks of the church?

The faithful preaching of the Word, the Administration of the Sacraments and Discipline.

60. List and describe the attributes of the church.

The Church is holy, set apart for God

The Church is Catholic, universal church united with all believers.

The Church is Apostolic because it was founded on the teachings and authority of the apostles.

61. Who is the head of the church?

Christ

62. What are the offices of the church?

Teaching Elders

Ruling Elders

Deacons

- a. What are the qualifications of each church office? Where do we find them listed?
The elders must be blameless, the husband of one wife, sober, prudent, of decent conduct, hospitable, capable of teaching, a man who governs his household well, who is a person with a good reputation inside and outside the church and that he is not a recent convert.

Deacons must be honest, without duplicity, not given to much alcohol, they must not be men greedy for dishonest gains, with a good testimony and full of the Holy Spirit.

Tim 3, Titus 1

63. Why are women not allowed to hold office in the church?

They cannot exercise authority over men.

- a. How would you refute the claim that this is a sexist policy?
Because the word of God is true and doesn't lie. From the Garden God established the roles of men and women.

64. Why are Presbyterian churches governed by elders?

Because it is what the Bible teaches us, that the church should be overseen by men who meet the proper characteristics.

SECTION X: CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

65. What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, by virtue of that which he has foreordained, for his own glory, everything that happens.

66. Did God decree evil?

God has decreed sin but God sinlessly uses sin for the praise of his glory.

67. How does God execute His decrees?

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, by virtue of which he has foreordained, for his own glory, everything that happens.

68. What are God's works of creation?

The work of creation consists in the fact that God has made all things out of nothing, by the power of his Word, in the space of six days and all of them were very good.

69. Does the Genesis account of creation describe history, or is it a story intended to teach a theological point?

Historical account of how God created the universe.

70. How do you understand the length of days in creation?

Everything in Gen 1-2 points to 24-hour days.

71. What are God's works of providence?

God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preservation and government of all his creatures and all their actions.

72. What are the three categories of 'law' found in the OT?

Moral law, Ceremonial Law and Civil Law

73. What categories of law are still binding upon believers in the NT era?

Moral Law

74. Do you believe the 4th Commandment is still binding on NT believers? If so, what would you do if you became aware that one of your congregants was contemplating taking a job which would regularly require him to work on Sundays?

Yes. This is where the individual must decide. But some necessary work, such as hospital care, is allowed on Sundays. My advice to this person would be to look for a job that gives them the most freedom possible on the Lord's Day, if it is not a necessary job.

75. Have you read the report of the PCA's Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality?

Yes, but it's been a while.

76. If so, what do you consider to be some of the key takeaways from this report?

It's been a while since I read this report, but something that I really liked was the faithful way in which the committee addressed the issue of human sexuality. They reminded us that our identity as people is found in Christ, that we were created in the image and likeness of God, man and woman, and that the entry of sin came to stain that perfect design of how we were created.

They state in the report that marriage since Genesis is only between a man and a woman and this is the way God established it, so dark thoughts and desires are still sin. Having had the opportunity to attend the general assembly and see how some referred to themselves as gay Christians, this report is a good response to that; as it reminds us where our identity lies and that it is not in our sexuality.

77. If a man who experiences same-sex attraction does not believe that God will increasingly take away these sinful desires over the course of his Christian life, is he fit to be teaching elder? If such a man commits himself to living a life of celibacy, is he then fit for the Christian ministry? Please explain how your answer comports with the Bible's teaching on sanctification.

In the first part of the question, this person has no understanding of what sanctification means and does not believe in the power of God to transform lives, or to remove desires, and so I do not believe this person should be in ministry. Sanctification is the work of the free grace of God, through which we are renewed in the whole of our being after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness. In the second part of the question, committing to a life of celibacy without believing in the power of sanctification through Christ would still not qualify this person for ministry. However, if this person committed to celibacy because he understands the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification throughout his life, then yes, he could be fit for ministry.

78. While all of us recognize that being honest about and confessing our sin struggles is an important part of mortifying our flesh, do you believe it is appropriate for a Christian to juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desire (e.g. same-sex attracted, bi-sexual, etc.) alongside his or her identity as a Christian, e.g. 'gay Christian,' etc.? Do you believe it is a sin to do so? Why, or why not?
- Of course it's a sin! This brother is basing his identity on his sexuality and not on Christ.

79. Do you believe that Critical Race Theory and/or the Black Lives Matter movement offer uniquely helpful insights that should be embraced by or disseminated within the church?

I think critical race theory and/or Black Lives Matter is something divisive, because it makes everything be seen in racial categories, not taking into account that we are all made in the image of God.

With this type of movement the only thing they achieve is to divide people. Before God there are no identities, there are no Latinos, whites or blacks, before him we are all his creations, made in his image.

Critical race theory tries to destabilize societies around the world, and it seeks to persuade people to consider all authority as something that oppresses us. These movements maintain that moral codes, religion, legal codes, science, etc., are nothing more than means by which the privileged protect their position and keep the oppressed down. It is a very divisive movement and should not be embraced by the church. We are instructed in Rev 22 not to take away or add anything to the word of God.

Using its commission powers under RPO 8-2.1.5, the MRC dismisses TE Patrick Fischl to Chicago Metro Presbytery, pending their receipt of him at their November 15, 2023 meeting.

Using its commission powers under RPO 8-2.1.5, the MRC dismisses TE Jason Wegener to Heartland Presbytery, pending their receipt of him at their October 28, 2023 meeting.

CALL LETTER

Subject to the approval of the Chicago Metro Presbytery, the Session of Grace Church, Crown Point earnestly calls you, Rev. Patrick Fischl to undertake the office of Assistant Pastor – Children and Families in our congregation, beginning on or about November 15, 2023, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly care and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following:

Annual Cash Salary & Housing Allowance , paid semi-monthly	\$ 80,000
<i>The amount/portion dedicated to housing allowance will be determined by the Minister, subject to establishing a residence and shall be approved by the Session before employment with the church in this new position and shall be reviewed prior to each fiscal year.</i>	
Primary Benefits <i>Subject to securing adequate health insurance</i>	
Medical Insurance &/or Medicare Supplement Insurance (specific \$ amount)	\$ 7,500
Retirement Savings: 403(b) plan	\$ 7,500
Life Insurance:	\$ 0
Equity Allowance if Minister living in a manse	\$ 0
Other:	\$ 0
Secondary Benefits	
Dental Insurance	\$ 0
Vision Insurance	\$ 0
Long Term Care Insurance	\$ 0
Temporary Benefits	
Relocation expenses reimbursed up to a maximum of:	\$ 6,000
Other _____	\$ 0
Miscellaneous Paid Leaves per year. (Any specific church policies are described in a separate document.)	
Vacation 28 days	Paternity Leave 14 days

Any reimbursement of reasonable and necessary business expenses shall be in accord with a Session-adopted reimbursement plan, with a maximum amount specified in the annual church budget.

I, having moderated the Session meeting which extended a call to Rev. Patrick Fischl for his ministerial services, do certify the call has been made in all respects according to the rules in the PCA Book of Church Order and the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the Session.

Meeting Moderator (sign) *Joy Eastman* Print name Joy Eastman
 Position Ruling Elder Phone or e-mail jeastman@gracepcatb.com
 Date of Meeting 10-17-23 Vote: # Yes = ✓ # No = _____
 Minister-Elect (sign) _____ Print name _____

Send a copy to the Clerk of Chicago Metro Presbytery: ChicagoMetroPres@a.gmail.com

**MINUTES OF THE CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
OF CHRIST CHURCH
KATY, TEXAS**

Date: October 21, 2023

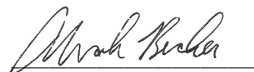
Time: 9:45 AM

Place: Christ Church – Katy, Texas

Purpose: Concur in dissolving the pastoral relationship with TE Jason Wegener at his request.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Fred Greco. Opened in prayer by RE Brister.
2. Quorum Established by show of hands
3. Election of Clerk of Meeting – **M/S/A** to elect RE Mark Becker.
4. **M/S/A** - That the congregation of Christ Church concur with the request to dissolve the pastoral relation between Christ Church and Associate Pastor Jason Wegener and accept his resignation, to be effective on October 31, 2023, and that Christ Church report the same to the Houston Metro Presbytery as per the Book of Church Order section 23-1.
5. **M/S/A** - That Pastor Wegener be thanked for his many years of faithful service to Christ Church and to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. **M/S/A** – to adjourn the meeting.
7. Close in prayer at 9:55 AM by TE Greco.

Respectfully submitted:



Mark Becker
Stated Clerk



Fred Greco
Moderator

REPORT OF COMMISSION TO INSTALL REV KEVIN AREVALO

Report of the Commission to install Rev. Kevin Arevalo as Associate Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church Sugar Land.

The Commission met on May 7, 2023, at 9:38 am at Redeemer Presbyterian Church Sugar Land. A quorum was present.

Commission members present were:

Janas Caruncho (TE)

Jaime Jimenez (TE)

David Fish (RE)

Michael Kuo (RE)

The Commission meeting was opened in prayer by TE Jaime Jimenez. TE Janas Caruncho was elected chairman and RE Michael Kuo was elected secretary of the Commission. The Commission recessed with prayer by RE David Fish for the installation service.

The chairman presided in the sanctuary service, which was opened with Scripture reading, prayer, confession, and singing. The sermon was preached by TE Janas Caruncho, on the text 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

The chairman stated briefly the proceedings of the Presbytery, and pointed out the nature and importance of the installation ordinance.

The chairman propounded the constitutional questions to the Candidate (BCO 21.9) and then propounded constitutional questions to the congregation (BCO 21.10), and these were all answered in the affirmative.

The chairman then declared that Rev. Kevin Arevalo had been regularly elected, ordained, and installed as Associate Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church Sugar Land.

The members of the Commission gave him the right hand of fellowship.

A charge to the pastor was delivered by RE David Fish

A charge to the congregation was delivered by RE Michael Kuo

TE Jaime Jimenez led a prayer after the charges.

The new associate pastor led communion and pronounced the benediction.

Michael Kuo

Secretary

HOUSTON METRO PRESBYTERY
REPORT OF COMMISSION TO INSTALL

Report of the Commission to install Rev. Jaime Jimenez as Assistant Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church (The Woodlands, TX).

The Commission met on October 8th, 2023, at 10:05 a.m. at Grace Presbyterian Church. A quorum was present.

Commission members present were:

TE Brad Wright (Grace)	RE Mark Moore (Grace)
TE Kyle Bobos (Grace)	RE Rob McIntosh (Grace)
	RE Jon Green (Grace)
	RE Dan Brink (Grace)

The Commission meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by Rev. Brad Wright.

Rev. Brad Wright was elected chairman and Rev. Kyle Bobos was elected Secretary of the Commission.

The order of Worship was reviewed and approved by the Commission. The minutes were read and approved.

The Commission recessed with prayer by RE Brad Wright for the installation service.

The Chairman presided in the sanctuary service, which was opened with singing, prayer and Scripture reading. The sermon was preached by Rev. Brad Wright, on Galatians 3:1-14, titled, *The Foolishness of the Gospel*.

The Chairman stated briefly the previous proceedings of the Presbytery, and pointed out the nature and importance of the installation ordinance.

RE Brad Wright propounded the constitutional questions to the Minister (BCO 21.9) and these were answered in the affirmative. RE Brad Wright then propounded the constitutional questions to the Session (BCO 21.10), and these were answered in the affirmative by the Session. Rev. Brad Wright led in prayer as Rev. Jaime Jimenez was installed as Assistant Pastor of the congregation. The Chairman then declared that Rev. Brad Wright had been called and installed as an Assistant Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church.

A charge to the Pastor and Congregation was delivered by Rev. Kyle Bobos.

Following communion, prayer and singing, Rev. Jaime Jimenez pronounced the benediction. The minutes having been approved, the Benediction closed this portion of the Commission's business.

Rev. 
Secretary

Houston Metro Presbytery - Committee Assignments - November 2023

Committee	Year	Title	First name	Last name	Church	Office	Email	Comments
Candidates and Credentials	2023	Rev.	Fred	Greco (Chairman)	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Teaching Elder	fred.greco@cckpca.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Rev.	Taylor	Leachman	Christ the King - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	taylor.leachman@adventpres.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Mr.	Danny	McDaniel	Spring Cypress - Spring, TX	Ruling Elder	danny.mcdaniel@advpres.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Mr.	Ken	Wynne	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	kwynne@burdinewynne.com	Agreed to new term
	2024	Mr.	David	Cias	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Ruling Elder	davecias@yahoo.com	
	2024	Mr.	Ryan	Bowling	RPC Beaumont	Ruling Elder	ryan.bowling@rpcbmt.org	
	2024	Rev.	Juan Carlos	Martinez	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	jcar.xr@gmail.com	
Ministerial Relations	2024	Rev.	Mark	O'Neill	Covenant - Lufkin, TX	Teaching Elder	markoneill2@gmail.com	
	2023	Mr.	Dan	Brink	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Ruling Elder	dan.j.brink@gmail.com	Agreed to new term
	2023	Rev.	Kyle	Bobos (Chairman)	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Teaching Elder	kyle@gracewoodlands.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Rev.	Fred	Greco	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Teaching Elder	fred.greco@cckpca.org	Agreed to new term
	2024	Rev.	Blake	Arnoult	Cornerstone - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	blake.arnoult@cornerstonehouston.com	
	2024	Mr.	Lee	Joseph	Spring Cypress - Spring, TX	Ruling Elder	leeneil914@gmail.com	
Mission to North America	2024	Mr.	Andres	Zelaya	Christ the King - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	andres.zelaya@christtheking.com	
	2023	Mr.	Sam	Massey, Jr	Christ PCA - Huntsville, TX	Ruling Elder	sampmasseyjr@gmail.com	
	2023	Rev.	Brooks	Harwood	RUM - University of Houston	Teaching Elder	brooks.harwood@ruf.org	
	2023	Mr.	Eric	Manthei	Riverside - Beaumont, TX	Ruling Elder	eric.manthei@riversidetxt.org	Agreed to new term
	2024	Mr.	Andy	Yung	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Ruling Elder		Need email
	2024	Rev.	Bradley	Wright (Chairman)	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Teaching Elder	brad@gpcwoodlands.org	
Mission to the World	2024	Rev.	Andres	Zelaya	Christ the King - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	andres.zelaya@christtheking.com	
	2023	Mr.	Keith	Pendergrass	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	keithpendergrass4@gmail.com	
	2023	Rev.	Ben	Duncan	Spring Cypress - Spring, TX	Teaching Elder	ben@springcypresschurch.com	
	2024	Mr.	Mark	Becker	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Ruling Elder	markbecker977@gmail.com	
Nominations	2024					Teaching Elder		Julian Zugg has asked to fill this seat.
	2023	Mr.	Daryl	Brister (Chairman)	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Ruling Elder	daryl.brister@gmail.com	Agreed to new term
	2023	Rev.	Chris	Yates	Bay Area - Webster, TX	Teaching Elder	cyates@bapc.org	Agreed to new term
	2024	Rev.	Joshua	Rieger	Riverside - Beaumont, TX	Teaching Elder	josh.rieger@riversidetxt.org	
Reformed University Ministries	2024	Mr.	Neal	Wade	Cornerstone - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	neal@hscreech.com	
	2023	Mr.	Ted	Hess	Covenant - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	tchess616@gmail.com	
	2023	Rev.	Dennis	Hermerding	King's Cross - Cypress, TX	Teaching Elder	dhermerding@gmail.com	
	2023	Rev.	Richard	Harris	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	rharris@cepc.org	Agreed to new term
	2024	Mr.	Erik	Haaland (Chairman)	Spring Cypress - Spring, TX	Ruling Elder	ewhaaland@gmail.com	
	2024	Rev.	John	Trapp	Christ the King - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	john.trapp@christtheking.com	
Review of Sessional Records	2024	Mr.	Travis	Graham	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	travis@travisandalysa.net	
	2023	Rev.	Mark	Blalack (Chairman)	RPC Beaumont	Teaching Elder	Mark.blalack@rpcbmt.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Rev.	Nolan	Williamson	Christ PCA - Huntsville, TX	Teaching Elder	nolan@cpchuntsville.org	Agreed to new term
	2023	Mr.	Jason	Walker	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder		
	2024	Mr.	Todd	Phillips	King's Cross - Cypress, TX	Ruling Elder	tp5795@sbcglobal.net	
	2024	Rev.	Curt	Mire	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Teaching Elder	curt.mire@cckpca.org	
Administrative Committee	2024	Mr.	Jeremy	Thomas	Covenant - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	jmessiah04@yahoo.com	
	Mod	Rev.	Blake	Arnoult	Cornerstone - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	blake.arnoult@cornerstonehouston.com	Dave Cias has agreed to be nominated for Moderator slot
	Clerk	Rev.	Lou	Veiga	Covenant - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	pastorveiga623@gmail.com	Lou is stepping down - Eric Manthei nominated to fill Clerk slot
	Treas.	Mr.	Dave	DeBruler	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Ruling Elder	dwdebruler@cepc.org	
	C&C	Rev.	Fred	Greco	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Teaching Elder	fred.greco@cckpca.org	
	MRC	Rev.	Kyle	Bobos	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Teaching Elder	kyle@gracewoodlands.org	
	MNA	Rev.	Bradley	Wright	Grace - The Woodlands, TX	Teaching Elder	brad@gpcwoodlands.org	
	MTW	Rev.	Jason	Wegener	Christ Church - Katy, TX	Ruling Elder	jason.wegener@cckpca.org	Keith Pendergrass will be new MTW chair
	Nom	Mr.	Daryl	Brister	Bay Area - Webster, TX	Ruling Elder	daryl.brister@gmail.com	
	RUM	Mr.	Erik	Haaland	Spring Cypress - Spring, TX	Teaching Elder	ewhaaland@gmail.com	
	RSR	Mr.	Mark	Blalack	King's Cross - Cypress, TX	Ruling Elder	Mark.blalack@rpcbmt.org	
	Chair	Rev.	Richard	Harris (Chairman)	Christ PC - Houston, TX	Teaching Elder	rharris@cepc.org	Daniel McDaniel has put his name in to chair here

NOTES:

EACH COMMITTEE TERM IS FOR TWO (2) YEARS OF SERVICE
 EACH YEAR, THE OUTGOING CLASS SEATS FOR EACH COMMITTEE WILL NEED TO BE REFILLED
 FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER, NOMINATIONS CHAIR TO SEND OUT EMAIL TO ALL HMP CHURCHES TE'S & CLERK'S ASKING FOR NOMINATIONS
 ONCE NOMINATIONS COME IN, OUR COMMITTEE WILL CHOOSE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PUT ON THE FLOOR AND/OR SEEK NOMINEES FR THE FLOOR IF NO NOMINEES
 OTHER NAMES CAN BE SUBMITTED FROM THE FLOOR AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING TO RUN AGAINST OUR COMMITTEES RECOMMENDATION
 COMMITTEE ELECTIONS ARE HELD AT THE HMP NOVEMBER MEETING
 THIS MASTER LIST IS TO BE MAINTAINED AND UPDATED BY THIS COMMITTEES CHAIR AND SUBMITTED TO THE HMP CLERK

NOTES FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF COMMISSIONERS (CoC), PERMANENT PCA COMMITTEES, & AGENCIES

THE FIRST WEEK IN DECEMBER, NOMINATIONS CHAIR WILL SEND OUT EMAIL TO ALL TE'S & CLERK'S ASKING FOR NOMINATIONS
 AT THE HMP JANUARY MEETING, OUR COMMITTEE WILL ASK FOR NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR FOR OPEN SLOTS THAT STILL HAVE NO ONE IN THEM (EITHER TE/RE)
 ALL CoC COMMISSIONERS ELECTED BY HMP ASSEMBLY, MUST BE RECORDED ON PCA FORM 065 REPORT OF APPOINTEES & FILED BY MID-APRIL AT PCA OFFICES
 ALL PERMANENT PCA COMMITTEES & AGENCY NOMINATION NAMES MUST BE RECORDED ON PCA FORM 059 AND EACH NOMINEE ON FORM 060 FILED FOUR (4) MONTHS BEFORE GA

Houston Metro Presbytery
Report of the Sessional Records Committee
(November 13, 2023)

The Sessional Records Committee met via email between November 7-10, 2023.

The following members of the Committee responded: *TE Mark Blalack, TE Curt Mire, RE Todd Phillips, RE Jeremy Thomas and RE Jason Walker (TE Pablo Martinez was absent)*

It was determined that there was a quorum.

Since the March 27, 2023 Meeting of Presbytery the minutes of the following churches have either had No Exceptions of Substance or have been approved as having Satisfactory Responses to Exceptions of Substance: *Christ the King, Cornerstone, Christ Church Katy, Christ, Covenant (Houston), Covenant (Lufkin), Grace (2021), Kings Cross, Reformed, Spring Cypress, Redeemer (2021), Riverside, Reformed*

Therefore, the Committee moves the following recommendations:

1. That the responses of the following churches to their Exceptions of Substance, received since the August 2023 Meeting of Presbytery, be approved as Satisfactory: *Faith CC ('21 & '22), Oaklawn ('22), Redeemer ('22), Southwest ('21 & '22)*
2. That the outstanding responses to Exceptions of Substance from the following churches be sent to the Sessional Records Committee no later than January 1, 2024: *Advent ('22), Bay Area ('22), Grace ('22), Hosanna ('21 & '22), Providence ('21 & '22)*
3. That this report be received as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed/ attested TE Mark Blalack, Reformed Presbyterian, Beaumont

2023-2024
BCO AMENDMENTS SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES
BY THE 50th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FOR VOTING, and for ADVICE AND CONSENT

NOTE: The Stated Clerk's Office sends the proposed amendments only in their final form, as approved by the General Assembly.

ITEM 1: Amend BCO 7-3, regarding titling of unordained people, by the addition of a sentence (underlined).

[Overture 26 was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

7-3. No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scripture. Furthermore, unordained people shall not be referred to as, or given the titles of, the ordained offices of pastor/elder, or deacon.

ITEM 2: Amend BCO 8-2 and 9-3, to require officers' conformity to Biblical standards for chastity and sexual purity in self-description, by the addition of the underlined wording.

[Overture 23 from Mississippi Valley Presbytery was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee. (Overtures 9, 16, 17, and 24 were answered with reference to Overture 23.)]

8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in his descriptions of himself, and in his convictions, character, and conduct. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.

9-3. To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment, conforming to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in their descriptions of themselves and in their convictions, character, and conduct.

ITEM 3: Amend BCO 38-1, regarding confessions and offended parties, as follow (strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording).

[**Overture 27** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery was answered in the affirmative as amended by the Overtures Committee.]

38-1. When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. A censured person has the right to appeal (*BCO* 42). The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19. [See Stated Clerk's note below.]

In any instances involving a personal offense (*BCO* 29-3), the court shall attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of the Confession the court deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the offended person to provide the court comment on the Confession prior to final approval of the Confession by the confessor and the court. The court shall encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any such comments. In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended persons were informed of the parts of the Confession pertinent to them.

[**Stated Clerk's Note:** The last two sentences in paragraph one above are necessary because the 50th GA Overtures Committee adopted wording prior to the 50th GA's adopting Items 9 and 10 of the Amendments Sent Down to Presbyteries by the 49th GA, thereby amending the same section of the *BCO*. See below, note 7 of the Rationale accompanying Overture 27.]

Rationale #7 from Overture 27 to 50th GA:

7. Note: The 49th GA approved two amendments to *BCO* 38-1 and sent them to presbyteries for a vote. As of April 11, 2023, presbyteries had voted 77-1 & 78-0 in favor. If the 50th GA in Memphis also approves them, then the current final sentence in *BCO* 38-1 ("*The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment*") will be revised to read: "A censured person has the right to appeal (*BCO* 42)." And an additional sentence will be added after it: "The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19." These two new sentences would not be touched or affected by this Overture.